WILD WEST WEEKLY

A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES ETC. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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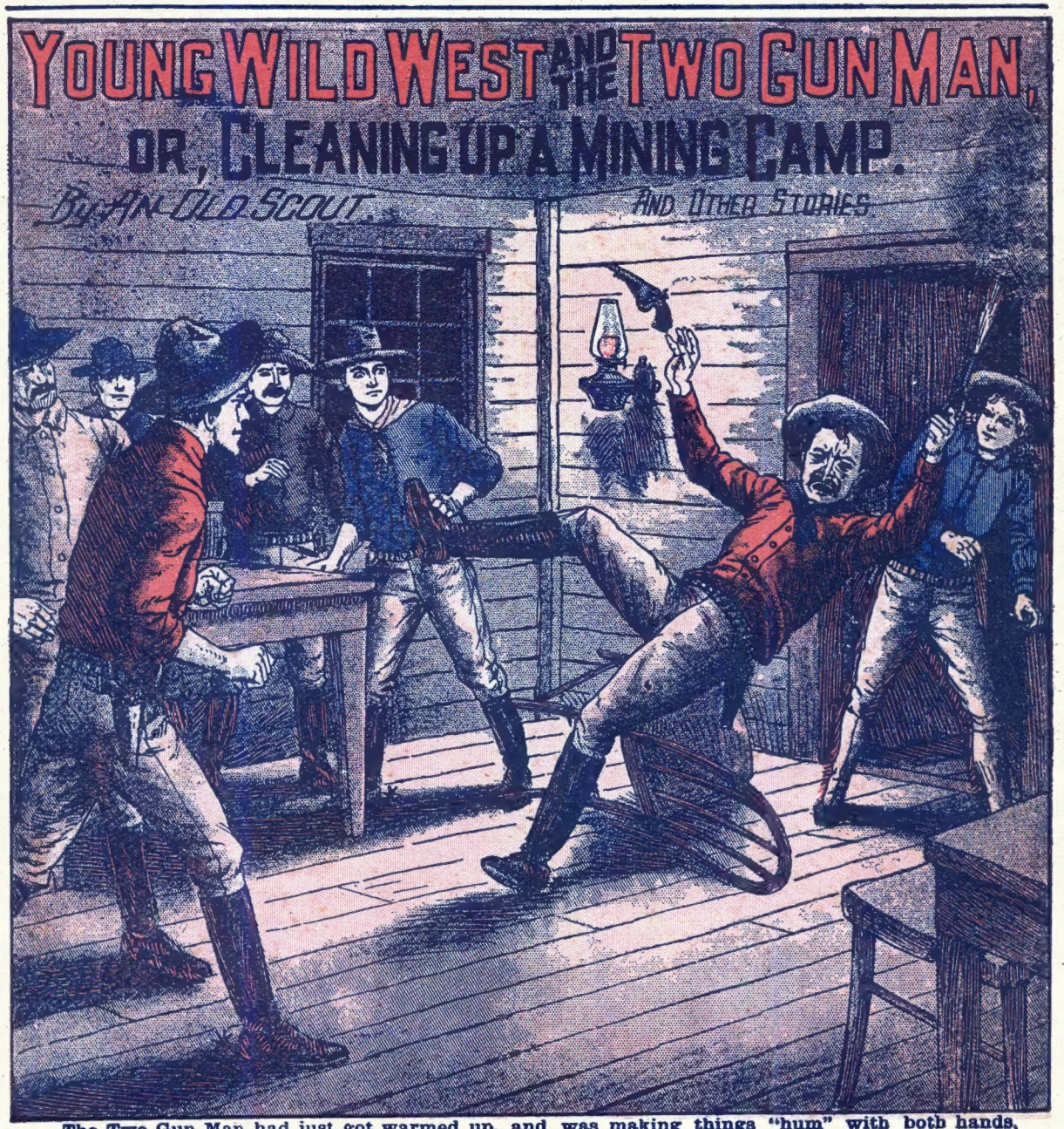

The Two Gun Man had just got warmed up, and was making things "hum" with both hands, when Young Wild West stepped in. As quick as a flash the young deadshot picked up a chair and knocked his feet from under him. "How does that hit you?" he coolly asked.

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Young Wild West and the Two-Gun Man

OR, CLEANING UP A MINING CAMP

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.—How the "Double Hanging" Was Stopped.

"Fetch ther two galoots along, boys! I reckon we'll soon make short work of 'em. We don't need no jedge an' jury, 'cause Rory Blake says they're ther ones what robbed his store last night, an' shot at him when he caught 'em at it. Rory Blake's word is good, an' yer all know that these two galoots is strangers, an' that they ain't been mixin' with ther boys here in ther camp. Still water runs deep, they say, an' here's a case of it."

The speaker was a brawny man of middle age, whose attire consisted of a flaming red shirt, corduroy trousers, high-topped boots, and a wide-brimmed hat that was much the worse for wear. His sleeves were rolled up, and in his right hand he held a revolver. One look at him would have sufficed to make the ordinary observer believe that he was a miner, and one of the rough-and-ready sort. The two men he referred to were being dragged along toward a lone tree that stood almost in the center of the collection of shanties and tents that went to make a mining camp that was called Bad Man's Roost.

This camp was located in the northwestern part of New Mexico, among the hills and fifty miles from the nearest town. The country was wild and picturesque there, for at the time of which we write no railroad ran up that way to give it a civilized appearance. The crowd of miners that was forcing the two men along toward the tree had but one purpose in view, and that was to hang them. They had been accused of robbing the till in the store early that morning, and had been found working on the double claim they had staked out about a week before the opening of our story.

Not one out of a hundred would have adjudged them guilty after getting a look at them, for their faces seemed to be those of honest men, and just now they were white with fear. Neither of them had reached the age of thirty, and though roughly dressed, there was more of a refined air about them than the other miners possessed. It was about ten o'clock on a fine morning in late spring when this scene is brought before the reader, and the rugged surroundings seemed suggestive of just such a scene. As the words of Copper Dan, the leader of the camp, rang out, Rory Blake, the storekeeper, who claimed to have been robbed by the two young men, shouted:

"Yer kin bet that my word is good, boys! I seen ther two galoots with my own eyes, an' if I'd been half a minute sooner they wouldn't have got away with ther hundred an' eighteen dollars I furgot ter take out of ther drawer last night when I closed up. They was in ther store when I was gittin' ready ter close, an' they must have watched an' seen that I left ther money in ther drawer. But I catched 'em dead ter rights this mornin', jest as it was gittin' a little light. When I hollered at 'em, an' then run ter git my gun, they both fired at me an' then jumped out of ther winder. They're ther ones, boys. There ain't no mistake about it. String 'em up, I say! They tried ter kill me, after they'd robbed me."

An angry shout went up from the crowd of rough-looking men, which numbered about thirty, and soon it deepened into a roar. The prisoners looked around appealingly, but there was no one there to interfere in their behalf. Every man present seemed to be against them. Some one ran forward with a rope and a noose was quickly thrown about the neck of one of them.

"Another rope, boys!" called out Copper Dan. "This is goin' ter be ther first double hangin' that was ever held in Bad Man's Roost, an' yer kin bet that it's goin' through without a hitch, too!"

The other rope was quickly brought, and then the two victims were dragged to the tree, choking and gasping in a vain effort to speak. They were halted directly beneath a stout limb that was about fifteen feet above them, and then, without waiting a second, Copper Dan coiled one of the ropes and deftly threw it over.

"Boys," said Copper Dan, looking around at the score of faces, "I s'pose it ain't no more'n right that they should be allowed ter say somethin' afore they swing. We're all satisfied that they done ther job in Blake's store this mornin', an' that's quite enough ter hang 'em fur. We don't want no thieves here, an' we ain't goin' ter have any, not if I have anythin' ter say. Go ahead, you thievin' galoots; now is your chance ter say somethin'! It might be better fur yer ter own up."

"We are not guilty, and if you will only give us a chance, we'll prove it," answered one of the men, trying his best to appear cool. "It is true that we were in the store last night as Blake was getting ready to close; but this morning we were asleep in our tent at the time you say the robbery took place. This man Blake is sore on

us because we won't sell him our claims, and only last night he told us he would get square with us if we did not take what he offered us and leave the camp. He lies when he says we robbed his money drawer and then shot at him, and he knows it!"

The words came out clear and distinct toward the last, and for the space of half a minute after they were uttered all eyes were turned upon the storekeeper. The miners could not help noticing that his face turned pale with anger, and then very pale, and some of them seemed inclined to believe what the condemned man said.

"Every word that Jack Harvey has just said is true, gentlemen," spoke up the other, who took a sudden courage at the silence of the miners. "Blake knows that he lies when he says that we robbed him and shot at him. He has accused us to get revenge on us because we would not sell out to him. He knows that our claim papers have not been filed yet, and that means that he might possibly get hold of the claims if we are out of the way. We are innocent! If there is one man here who believes it, let him speak out."

Again there was a silence—an awful silence, too, for there was no doubt some there who were on the verge of speaking but felt that they dared not. It was just at this juncture that the clatter of hoofs sounded on the stony trail that led into the mining camp. Instantly all eyes were turned in that direction. What they saw was a handsome boy attired in a fancy hunting suit of buckskin and mounted on a clean-limbed sorrel.

He was coming like the wind and only a couple of hundred yards away. As the miners and the condemned men looked, they saw a young girl mounted on a milk-white broncho appear around the bend, after the boy, like a streak of lightning. Then came others, both male and female riders. But before they had a chance to take them all in, the boy reached the scene, and as the sorrel stallion he rode came to a sudden halt, every eye was turned upon the boy.

"What seems to be the trouble, boys?"

"There ain't no trouble," Copper Dan answered, his small, black eyes flashing with a glint of defiance. "We're jest goin' ter have a double hangin', that's all. If you don't want ter look at it yer kin turn an' go ther other way. Maybe——"

"Don't let them hang those men, Wild!" called out the girl on the white horse, who reached the scene at that moment and interrupted the master of ceremonies. "I can tell by their faces that they are not deserving of such a fate."

"All right, Et," was the boy's retort. "I reckon we'll find out what they are going to be hanged for, anyhow. If they are guilty of murder I suppose it is not for us to interfere. But if they are not, or haven't had a chance to prove their innocence, then they won't hang."

When we say that the speaker was no other than Young Wild West, the dashing Prince of the Saddle, and recognized Champion Deadshot of the West, the bulk of our readers will readily understand why he was so cool in the way he acted. The girl, who had followed him so closely to the scene was his golden-haired sweetheart, Arietta Murdock, who was, without doubt, one of the bravest girls ever born and raised in the wild West. The others of the party were Cheyenne Charlie, the ex-Government scout and Indian fighter, and his wife, Anna; Jim Dart, a boy chum of our hero, and Eloise Gardner, his girl sweetheart, and Hop Wah and Wing Wah, the two servants who always traveled with them when they made their tours through the wild parts of the West in search of adventure and fortune.

They all sat on their horses, watching the scene and listening to what was being said. No one seemed to be much frightened, either, which told that they were quite used to such scenes. The two young men standing there with the ropes about their necks and their hands tied behind their backs, had brightened up wonderfully. At last some one had come to their aid.

"We are innocent of the charge against us," declared one of them, looking Wild squarely in the eyes. "The man who accuses us of robbing his store and shooting at him is doing it merely for revenge. He wants to get us out of the way so he can get possession of the double claim we are working."

Then the other spoke up, declaring the same thing and adding that he hoped they might have a chance to prove their innocence. Copper Dan had remained still for what seemed to be a long time to the miners, who knew his disposition, but now he broke forth in a string of oaths. Young Wild West slid from the back of his horse, and as quick as a flash he leaped forward and struck the man a blow on the mouth.

"Knock ther daylights out of him, Wild!" called out Cheyenne Charlie from the back of his horse. "Jest show these galoots what yer kin do. I'll drop ther first one what goes ter interfere! I reckon there ain't many as feels like doin' it, so there ain't goin' ter be no trouble about it."

The scout spoke in a way that showed he had enough confidence in himself to take care of the situation while his dashing young leader was thrashing the villain. We say villain, for that was what Copper Dan was, beyond the shadow of a doubt. But he did not want to be thrashed. He had been hit twice by a clenched fist that was launched forward by a very muscular arm, and now he only thought of killing the boy. He did not attempt to pull his gun, but as he recovered from the second blow he slipped his hand to the hilt of his hunting knife, and the next instant it flashed in his hand.

But Young Wild West stepped nimbly to the right, and as a savage thrust was made with the knife he was out of the way, and the blade simply cut the empty air. Spat! A right swing from the boy caught Copper Dan just behind the left ear, and then down he went, the knife dropping from his hand. Then the dashing young Prince of the Saddle stepped up and quickly severed the bonds that held the hands of the two young men behind their backs. The next minute they were standing by the boy's partners and the girls.

It was not until then that the leader of the camp arose. He had been so dazed by the last blow he received that it took him a full minute to recover. He looked up at the limb the ropes had been thrown over; then at the spot where the two young men had been standing, and finally his eyes fell upon the boy who had stopped the double hanging.

"What's ther matter, anyhow?" he blurted out.

CHAPTER II.—The Innocence of the Two Miners Is Proved.

"Pick up that knife and put it in your belt," said Young Wild West, in answer to the query of the leader of the camp. "I reckon you made a little mistake, that's all. I am a stranger here, but I won't see two men hanged without a chance to prove themselves innocent of the charge made against them. I don't like the looks of you, anyhow. I believe that you would hang a man just for the fun you could get out of it. And as for that man over there, who says these two men robbed his store, he is a liar! I can read that much in his face. He has the heart of a scoundrel, and you will all find it out before long. Now, gentlemen, what is your pleasure?"

There was such a cool way about the boy as he talked that both good and bad in the crowd seemed awed for the time. Never had they met such a dashing, outspoken, cool person. Rory Blake began moving away.

"Do yer want him, Wild?" Cheyenne Charlie asked.

"Not just now," was the reply. "Let him go. We will see to his case later. What we want now is to give these two fellows a chance to prove their innocence."

"We'll do that just as soon as we can find the man who stopped at our shanty last night," replied one of them. "He must be around somewhere."

"All right. You go and look for him. Your pard will stay here till you come back."

They both brightened up at this. No one raised any objections when the young man started from the spot at a brisk walk. Young Wild West coolly went over to where he had left his horse standing.

"I reckon we'll find a place somewhere around here to pitch our camp, Jim," said he to his boy chum, who was one of his partners, both in traveling and business.

The business they were engaged in was mining, but they had so arranged matters that they were at liberty to go traveling about the country on horseback in search of excitement and adventure, and a little fortune thrown in.

"Right under the cliff is the spot for us, Wild," said Arietta, nodding her golden head and looking pleased.

"That's right," was the reply. "You know a good camping spot when you see it. There's no mistake about that.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, turning to the miners, "I reckon this thing will be straightened out presently. If the accused men are really guilty I shan't object to your hanging them. But I honestly believe that they are innocent. The storekeeper has lied, that's about the size of it."

"Well, you'll soon find out now," said the accused young man. "Here comes Jack with the man who slept in our shanty last night."

Sure enough, his pard was coming with an old man, who wore the garb of a hunter, and carried a rifle in his hand.

"That's old Bill Harrigan," spoke up the miner, who had just expressed himself before the young man spoke. "I reckon everybody around here knows that he wouldn't tell a lie. If he says they was in their shanty this mornin' when ther robbery took place yer kin bet your pile that it's so."

"That's right!" exclaimed another man in the crowd. "Old Bill wouldn't lie fur no one. He's been comin' around here every week or so ever since ther camp has been here, an' what he says kin always be depended on."

The young man, who was now almost jubilant, turned to Wild and said:

"My name is Phil Spooner. My pard is Jack Harvey. We've been prospecting for nearly two years, and in that time we have never struck it rich. But we've struck a placer up there under the cliff, an' it's turnin' out pretty good. It may be that we'll do all right with it, providin' we are let alone."

"Well, I reckon you'll be let alone, if the mining camp has to be cleaned up to do it," our hero answered. "But what was that I just heard about the Two-Gun Man? Is he the bad man of the camp?"

"Yes; he's a pretty bad one when he's been drinking; but when he's sober he's all right. He can shoot with both hands, and he seldom misses what he shoots at. That's why they call him the Two-Gun Man. His name is Dank Howler, so I've heard."

Before anything further could be said about the Two-Gun Man, whom our hero seemed to be very much interested in, Jack Harvey and the old hunter came up.

"Where's ther man as says that these two fellows robbed ther store at daylight this mornin'?" demanded the latter, casting a searching look at the miners.

"It was Rory Blake what said it," answered one of them.

"Well, Rory Blake tells what ain't so, then, fur I slept in ther shanty of Harvey an' Spooner, an' I'll take an affidavit that they was there with me, an' didn't come out of it till sunrise. I reckon Blake has made a big mistake in his men."

"That settles it!" cried the miner who had been doing most of the talking. "They ain't guilty, boys. Blake has either made a mistake, or he's put up a job ter git clear of Spooner an' Harvey. It's all settled now. If Bill Harrigan says he was with 'em till after daylight we know fur sure that they didn't do it."

Young Wild West took the hunter by the hand and shook it warmly.

"I reckon it was a pretty narrow escape the two had," he said. "I was riding into the camp with my friends here, and I happened to see that something was going on that looked like preparations for a lynching. Then I put my horse on a dead run and got there in time to stop it. I am mighty glad I did, too."

"An' so am I," replied the hunter fervently. "I never did take any stock in ther storekeeper, but I didn't think he'd do anything like this. I reckon I'll go an' interview him now. I want ter find out what he meant by it. Don't think I'm afraid ter give it ter him good an' straight, fur I ain't. There ain't nothin' like Blake as kin scare me. I've been through ther mill, I have, I always minds my own business, too."

He headed straight for the store, which was one of the kind usually found in mining camps of a small population, and as it was right on their way to the place where they had decided to

pitch their camp, our hero and his friends followed. The storekeeper was on the narrow stoop that was only about a foot from the level ground, and when he saw them coming he turned and went inside. Wild walked along, leading his horse, while the rest of our friends rode in the saddle. The old hunter strode along at a pace that showed how well he was used to walking.

He went upon the stoop and stepped in, just as though he wanted to purchase something and was in a hurry. Wild was right after him, and, dismounting, Arietta followed him. Then in walked the two men who had come so near being lynched for a crime they had not committed.

"Well, Blake," said Bill Harrigan, looking the villainous proprietor squarely in the eyes, "how comes it that yer said that Spooner an' Harvey robbed your store this mornin'?"

"I thought sure it was them, Bill," was the reply. "I can't help thinkin' so yet, but I might be mistaken. It wasn't very light, yer know."

"Well, it wasn't them, fur I was lying in their shanty with 'em from ten last night till six this mornin' an' I know they never went out once. I was awake jest as it was gittin' daylight, an' I never went ter sleep ag'in. They was both sound asleep then, so that settles it that they wasn't ther ones. I happened ter strike their shanty a little late last night, an' they give me my supper an' invited me ter sleep there. I knowed they meant it when they asked me, so I stayed. I went out as soon as I got my breakfast, 'cause I had a bundle of pelts in a cave a couple of miles away, an' I wanted ter git 'em an' fetch 'em over to your store. I struck ther tracks of a bear on ther way, an' it took me quite a little time ter git him. That's why I wasn't around when yer come an' grabbed ther two young men. Blake, I'm a putty old man, but if you say it was them what robbed you, I'll have ter call yer a liar!"

"I ain't sayin' it was them fur sure," replied the storekeeper, shrugging his shoulders. "But it sartinly looked as though it was them. As I jest said, I might be mistaken."

"See here, Mr. Blake," said Wild, walking up to him. "Are you sure you was robbed?"

"Why, sartin I am. What kind of a question is that ter ask?" was the reply.

"Well, I'll bet you that no one robbed you at all—that there was no one in your store, except yourself, this morning at the time you state."

"You'll bet me a hundred dollars?"

"Yes."

The young deadshot drew the money from his pocket.

"How are you goin' ter prove anything like that?" gasped Blake, turning red in the face.

"Never mind about that. Put up your money."

"I won't make no bet on a thing like that. What do you know about ther case, anyhow? Ain't yer satisfied that ther two galoots didn't hang? Go out of my store, Young Wild West! Yer ain't wanted here."

"I'll go out when I get good and ready, Blake. But before I do go I want to see that gun you've got. Hand it over right now, and be sure that you keep the muzzle toward you as you do it. You hear what I say!"

Wild thought he knew a way to prove that the man was telling a lie, all through, and he was going to find out whether it was right or not. He quickly pulled a revolver and covered the villain. Then Blake lost no time in handing over his own gun.

"Ah!" said Wild, smiling at him. "Now I want to ask you a question or two: Did both of the men who robbed you fire at you when you tried to stop them from getting away?"

"Sartin they did. I kin show yer where ther bullets hit, too."

The man brightened up now, as though he had found a way to prove that he had been telling the truth.

"Well, where did the bullets hit?"

"Right here," and he walked over to a pile of boxes and showed two fresh bullet holes in one of them, just about a foot higher than the top of his head came.

"They meant ter drop me," he went on to say. "They both fired as they was by that winder over there. Then they opened it quick an' got out."

"Is that so?"

Wild made out that he was half inclined to believe the story.

"Yes, that's right. I thought sure that they was Spooner an' Harvey, 'cause they was ther last ones ter go out of here last night when I was closin', an' they must have knowed that I didn't take ther money out of ther drawer."

"Did you fire at them as they went out of the window?"

"No; I didn't have my gun jest then."

Our hero now examined the chambers of the revolver. Two were empty.

"When did you shoot this thing last?" he asked.

The storekeeper became confused then, for he seemed to know that he was caught in a trap.

"I—I don't know," he stammered. "What has that got to do with it, anyhow?"

"Probably nothing. I merely asked the question, that's all."

Wild now turned his attention to the window. Cobwebs were thick upon it, some of the small panes of glass being entirely covered with them. He walked over to it and tried to raise it. But it would not budge. The probabilities were that it had not been opened in a long time, and had become set fast. That was enough to satisfy Young Wild West. He walked back to the storekeeper and said:

"Here is your gun, Blake. You told a lie when you said you were robbed at daylight this morning and that the thieves jumped out of that window. That window hasn't been opened in a month, and I'll bet on it. It was you who put the two holes through the box, and the empty shells are in your gun. I reckon that will be about all."

He walked out of the store, followed by the rest, leaving Blake staring at them.

"Now, then, I reckon we'll go up there with you and pitch our camp," he observed, smiling at the two young miners. "I reckon Blake will know how to behave himself in the future. If he don't he'll find out, that's all."

"Three cheers for Young Wild West!" shouted Jack Harvey, waving his hat.

All joined in giving them, but the dashing young deadshot only smiled, for he was used to that sort of thing.

CHAPTER III.—Wild Shows the Two Miners Some Clever Shooting.

The majority of the miners were at the saloon when our friends left the store and went past it, but the others had gone to their work. Wild did not stop at the saloon just then. He wanted to get settled down in camp first. Then he might take a notion to visit the place and get better acquainted with the miners. One thing he was satisfied upon was that the camp was a pretty tough one. The fact that it had been named Bad Man's Roost was suggestive of this. But the majority of those he had seen were of the stamp who have little or no regard for anything like law and order.

The boy was quite sure of that. He had dropped into the town by mere chance that morning, and now that he was there, he meant to stay long enough to see that the two miners were not interfered with any further. The shanty belonging to Spooner and Harvey was soon reached.

"There you are," said Spooner, pointing out the spot that was most desirous for a camping place. "I think that will just suit you. I hope you will make up your mind to remain here a while, Young Wild West. To tell the truth, I hardly think we will be safe here. There are more bad men here than good ones. The bad ones seem to think a lot of Copper Dan and Blake, too. They will be easily led by them, and if they take the notion they will try and put an end to us, anyhow. If it comes to the worst, I suppose we will have to abandon our claim here and leave the mining camp."

"Don't think of doing that, Spooner. If your claim is paying, just stick right to it. We haven't anything to do just at present, and we'll stick to you. I reckon this camp needs cleaning up, and you can bet that we'll do it, too, if we start in once."

"Well, the two claims we have staked out are paying ones—good paying, too. The placer we found the other day reaches for two hundred feet, and the strangest part about it is that it takes in both claims. If we can stay here a month and keep what we get, we'll be all right, and willing to leave Bad Man's Roost."

"That's right, Young Wild West," spoke up Harvey. "But Copper Dan will want to be revenged somehow for what has happened this morning. And Blake will surely try to finish us in some way. Then there's Dank Howler, too! He will join in with them, of course."

"Dank Howler, eh?" said Wild, smiling at the speaker.

"Yes; the Two-Gun Man, as they call him."

"Well, he is just the man I want to meet. There are those who call me the Champion Deadshot of the West, and if he can shoot any quicker or straighter than I can, I want to know it. I happen to be able to shoot with either hand, too, you know."

The boy spoke in a way that did not show anything like braggadocia, and the two miners looked at him with admiration showing on their faces.

"Well, I hope the Two-Gun Man don't show up for a while," said Spooner. "He might get the best of you, in spite of anything you could do. There isn't a man in the camp who would dare fight him."

Wild laughed.

"Then he has it all his own way, I suppose. That's easy for him. He has got everybody afraid of him. Wait until he strikes some one who won't stand for his nonsense; then it might be different with him. I reckon I'll show the Gun Man a trick that he never heard of before."

Spooner happened to look at Arietta just then, and when he saw that her face wore a smile he realized that the boy must surely be an exception to the general run.

"I've got enough faith in you to believe that you'll prove more than a match for Dank Howler, Young Wild West," he said. "But after a while I wish you would show us just what you can do at shooting. Then we will be able to form an opinion as to what kind of a show you would have, if you should oppose the Two-Gun Man."

"All right," answered the young deadshot, with a laugh. "I'll do that as soon as we get the camp in shape. Hop, you and Wing get a move on you and unload the pack horses. I reckon we are going to stay here a while, so you can put up the tents."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," came the reply, both speaking at once.

When Wild had personally seen to his own horse and that of Arietta, he walked over to the shanty where the two miners were sitting at the shady side and said:

"Now I reckon I'll give you a little exhibition of my shooting. You heard it said that I was the Champion Deadshot of the West, so it will be well for you to pass your opinion as to whether or not I am entitled to be called such. I want you to understand that I did not give myself the name, though."

"Well, if you are as good as the Two-Gun Man with a revolver in each hand you must be a wonder," answered Jack Harvey.

"Then you must think the Two-Gun Man is a wonder?" laughed Wild.

"I do. If it were not for his ugly disposition, and his desire to bulldoze any one he takes the notion to, I would be glad to be called an acquaintance of his."

"Well, I'll soon show you whether I am as good as he is or not. Now just hang up that pair of old boots that one of you has discarded. Run a rope through the straps and stretch it from the corner of the shanty to that tree over there. I see a rope coiled up inside that will just about be the thing."

The miners did not know just what he was going to do, but they hastened to do his bidding. Cheyenne Charlie came and helped them, for he had an idea that Wild meant to have the boots dancing clear of the ground, while he shot at them with both hands. And this is just what the dashing young deadshot meant to do. The rope was soon stretched, with one end tied to the tree and the other through the hook that was fastened to the corner of the shanty. The boots hung at about the center of it, probably a foot apart.

"Now, then, Harvey," said our hero, "you just pull on the rope and make those boots act as though they were on the feet of a man dancing

and jumping to escape having his corns hurt by bullets. Then I'll try some shooting with both hands."

"All right," was the reply. "I know what you mean. Say when you are ready."

"I am ready now. Get to work."

Harvey began jerking upon the rope and the boots began to bob up and down, swinging this way and that. It was a rather ludicrous scene, and the girls were unable to keep from coming over to have a good look. Wild stepped about ten feet from the dancing pair of boots, and then he suddenly grabbed the revolvers which were protruding from the holsters on either side of him. Crack—crack! Two reports rang out so quickly that they almost blended into one. Both boots were hit, as they could all see. But it was the heels that our hero was shooting at, and he resumed firing. Five times he shot with each hand, and almost at the same time. Then he let go the two last shots and both boots dropped to the ground. The straps that held them to the rope had been severed by the bullets, making the last two the most wonderful shots of all. And it had been done so quickly that the two miners could hardly realize it.

"Well, Jack, what do you think of that?" asked Spooner, when he found the use of his tongue.

"Great, wasn't it, Phil?" was the reply. "I guess the Two-Gun Man will find that he has met his match when he tackles Young Wild West."

"Yes, there isn't any doubt about that. I am satisfied now."

"Well," said Wild, smiling at them, "I see that you have both got clay pipes. Are they the only ones you have?"

"Oh, no!" came the reply from Harvey. "We buy 'em by the dozen at Blake's store."

He had just filled his pipe, and his partner was following suit.

"All right. Just light up and stand about thirty feet apart, will you?"

"What for?" queried Spooner anxiously.

"I want to show you another two-gun shot, that's all. I won't hurt you. Charlie, just place them in position, will you?"

"You bet I will," was the quick reply. "Come here, Spooner. I'll place you first."

The miner walked gingerly to the spot the scout had selected.

"You stand right here," said Charlie. "Light your pipe, and puff away, an' keep looking straight at ther top of ther cliff jest as though yer was watchin' somethin' up there. Understand?"

"Yes, I understand," was the reply.

"All right. Now, Harvey, you come over here," and the scout walked over to the other side of where our hero was standing.

Harvey must have made up his mind that if his pard could do it, he could, though he felt that something which was dangerous was going to be done by the young deadshot. Charlie got him where he wanted to, and both smoked away at their pipes, Spooner with his face turned toward the cliff and Harvey looking in a direction that was exactly opposite. Wild now walked halfway between them, reloading his two revolvers as he did so. When he was ready to give the demonstration of the two-gun shooting he called out:

"Steady, boys. Don't move an inch."

The two men stood like statues. It really was a dangerous thing to do, but the boy had absolute confidence in himself, and that made it nothing more than the mere straight shooting at a target to him. Up went his right hand, and—Crack! Then his left followed as his head turned quickly to the left. Crack! The pipes were broken and dropped to the ground, save the pieces of the stems that remained in the mouths of the two men.

"Whoopee!" shouted Cheyenne Charlie. "That's what yer call two-gun shootin'! Wow! Whoopee!"

Harvey and Spooner looked at each other as they turned their heads. Then, as if acting on the one impulse, they took the pieces of pipe-stems from between their teeth and looked at them.

"I reckon that will be about all in that line, for the present, anyhow," said Wild. "Now fetch along the Two-Gun Man."

The two rushed over to him and seized his hand.

"Dank Howler used us to practice upon several times," said Harvey. "But he never did anything like that. He has shot holes through our sleeves, and clipped pieces from the heels of our boots, but such shooting as you have just done I would not care to have him try on us. But he is a bad man, especially when he has been drinking whisky."

"That's all right," our hero answered. "I reckon I won't interfere with him, unless he tries his game on me. But he'll do that, of course, for some of the miners here know something about me, and by this time it has got all through the camp that I am called the Champion Deadshot of the West. When the Two-Gun Man hears that he will start out to hunt me up. You can bet on that, boys!"

"If he's ther kind of a galoot they say he is, he will, Wild," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie.

Our hero now walked over to where the Chinamen were at work. They had been at it since they started, and they were just putting the finishing touches to it when the boy walked up. Hop smiled in his "childlike and bland" way, and then he remarked:

"Misler Wild, me likee takee lillee walk to um saloon, so be. Me allee samee gottee velly bad pain."

"You've got a pain, and you need a few drinks of tanglefoot to cure it, I suppose."

"Lat light, Misler Wild. You allee samee knowee justee how um poor Chinee feel, so be."

Then he bent himself double and put an expression of agony on his yellow face. Wild could not help laughing. As much as he knew the ways of the clever Chinaman, this funny move on his part was really comical.

"All right," he said. "Go and get your tanglefoot, Hop. It is a way you have, and if I don't drink the stuff myself, it is no reason why others shouldn't. But if you get tipsy you may look out for trouble when you come back."

"Me no gittee dlunk, Misler Wild," the Chinaman declared, shaking his head, as though he would not think of doing such a thing, even.

But the fact was that he seldom did get that way. He was one of the sort who know when they have enough, though frequently it took

quite a lot to make enough. Hop ran around and made sure that there was nothing more for him to do, and then he made a beeline down the slope for the saloon. There was but one in the camp, for the population was either not large enough to support more than that, or no one had yet had the courage to start another.

"That's a peculiar sort of a Chinaman, I should say," remarked Harvey, as he came over and surveyed the neat little camp. "I saw the performance he was going through when he told you he had such a pain. Does he like whisky?"

"Yes; a little more than he should, too," our hero replied. "But in spite of that, Hop is as good as gold. He is as smart as a steel trap, and it takes a good one to get the best of him. Are there any card sharps in this place?"

"Oh, yes! Quite a few of them, I should say. Poker games are on every night, and often some of them lasts until daylight. The Two-Gun Man is great at that game. They say he is very slick with the cards."

"Well, I hope Hop stacks up against him, then. But how is it that the Two-Gun Man isn't in town to-day?"

"Oh, he isn't here every day. He takes a notion to go over to Silver Junction about twice a week in the stagecoach. He makes his living by gambling. The Junction is only about twenty-five miles from here, and is quite a big place. The stagecoach is due here at noon, which is only about an hour off, and it is quite likely he will come with it. Then the first thing he will do will be to fill up on 'pizen,' as he calls it, and by to-night he will be in trim for anything that comes along."

"All right. That will be the time when I'll make his acquaintance, then."

It was not long before Wing, the cook, began making preparations for the noonday meal. Our friends always made it a point to carry a good supply of provisions with them, and with the game they shot they generally fared pretty good.

CHAPTER IV.—Hop Wah and the Miners.

Hop Wah walked into the saloon, his face wearing an innocent smile. More than a dozen men were there, among them being Copper Dan, the leader of the camp. The moment he saw the Chinaman a scowl came upon his brow, for he knew he was a member of Young Wild West's party. Some of the miners grinned, and, noticing it, Hop did the same. Then he bowed right and left to them in a manner that was nothing if not extremely polite.

"Velly nicee day," he said, as he turned to the man in charge of the place.

"I reckon it is, heathen," was the reply. "Did yer come in here jest ter tell me that, or did yer want ter buy somethin'?"

"Me wantee buy um lillee dlink of tanglefoot, so be."

"Oh! All right, then. I don't know as I ever sold a heathen a drink afore, but I reckon your money is as good as any one's. But let me see ther coin first."

"Me gottee plenty money, so be."

Hop drew forth a bag that contained both gold and silver, and as he dumped some of the contents on the rough bar those present became interested at once. There was easily a hundred dollars in what he had shown, and there was more in the bag. The clever Chinaman slipped a twenty-dollar goldpiece toward the man, who was the boss himself, and said:

"Me tleat allee hands; me allee samee Melican man; tlue blue sport, so be."

"Come, boys!" cried the boss. "Yer heard what he said. Everybody is ter drink."

They all stepped to the bar, even to Copper Dan, who had not recovered from the effects of his meeting with Young Wild West. Hop got his change after the drinks had been put out, and the proprietor took up the bottle and he proceeded to refill it. The clever Celestial watched him as he did this, and when it had been placed on the bar, and the cork put in place, he reached over and made out he was examining it.

"Me likee havee um bottle of tanglefoot, so be," he said, smiling and nodding his head.

"Give me five dollars an' it's yours," was the quick reply.

"Me no wantee pay um fivee dollee; me wantee um bottle for allee samee nothing, so be."

"Oh! I reckon any one would take it if they could git it fur nuthin'. But givin' away quart bottles of whisky ain't in my line of business."

Hop smiled, as though he did not know what it was for, and then he coolly slipped the bottle into a pocket that was on the inside of the loose-fitting coat he wore.

"Here, you heathen! What are yer tryin' ter do?" cried the boss. "Jest fork over that bottle or there'll be a Chinese funeral in this here camp!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Hop innocently, "me allee samee makee um mistakee, so be."

Then he quickly placed what looked to be the same bottle on the bar.

"You're a kind of a joker, I reckon," and the boss laughed. "Yer didn't have no idea that yer was goin' ter git away with that, did yer?"

"Me makee lillee mistakee, lat allee," was the reply.

"I reckon we'd better have another drink then, on ther strength of ther mistake," remarked one of the miners, who seemed to regard what the Chinaman had done as a pretty good joke. "Jest take ther cork out of ther bottle, Jake. Come, boys, we'll drink to ther health of ther heathen."

The boss obeyed with alacrity. The first man to take the bottle poured some of the contents in his glass and then looked amazed.

"Funny-lookin' licker, I reckon," he observed. "Looks like water ter me."

Then he held up the glass, and it certainly looked as though it was water that he had put in it.

"Um boss allee samee fillee um bottle with watee, so be," observed Hop, smiling, as though he knew it all the time. "Velly nicee jokee, allee samee."

The proprietor was very much surprised. He took the bottle, poured some of the contents in a glass and smelled it. Then he looked more surprised than ever and tasted it.

"Water, by thunder!" he exclaimed. "What's ther matter, anyhow?" said the miner, who had

ordered the round, as he winked at the rest. "Jake, you're a mighty smart joker all at once."

"No," was the reply. "I didn't put no water in that bottle. I'll take my affidavy on that! I filled ther bottle from ther big demijohn here. I reckon I know what I done."

The tone of voice and his actions told the men that he spoke the truth, as far as he knew.

"Velly stlange," said Hop, shaking his head.

If ever there was a puzzled man it was the boss of that saloon. The miner who had ordered the round waited a few minutes, and then he called out:

"Come, Jake! Put out some red eye. I want ter spend money, I do."

That broke the spell that had come upon the proprietor. He put the bottle of water on the shelf behind him, and then he filled another from the demijohn.

"There!" he exclaimed, as he put it out for them to help themselves. "We'll see if that will turn ter water."

Hop drank with the fest, and smiling like a pleased child, he put his glass on the bar.

"Now we allee samee havee lillee gamee pokee," he said, walking over to a table and taking a seat. "Me likee play pokee, so be. Um empelor of China play with me many timee, so be. Um empelor velly muchee lucky, and he allee samee win velly muchee."

It so happened that Copper Dan was a sort of card sharp. Such men usually are—or they have that opinion, anyhow. While he did not want to do anything to hurt the Chinaman, as far as bodily injury went, he did feel that if he could clean him out of what money he possessed he would be doing something toward getting square with the boy, who had thrashed him before the crowd but an hour before. The Chinaman was in the employ of Young Wild West, and that was sufficient to make him feel bitter toward him.

"I'll jine in a game with yer," he said, walking over and taking a seat at the table. "How much money have yer got? We don't play here unless there ain't no limit."

"Me gottee plenty money, so be," was the reply. "Me likee play dlaw pokee."

"All right, then. Does any one else want ter take a hand?" and the leader of the camp looked around at those in the room.

"Me likee play allee samee fivee-handee gamee, so be," Hop spoke up.

"Well, I reckon there's enough here ter pick five from," answered a ruffian who had but one eye and who was sometimes called Copper Dan's right bower.

His name was Betts, and that was what he was called, no one knowing or caring to know his given name. There was enough, as the one-eyed man said; and more than enough, for they all wanted to play. But Copper Dan invited those he preferred, and the four sat down, Betts being one of them.

"Fetch a new deck of cards, Jake!" called out Copper Dan. "This is goin' ter be one of ther greatest games ever played in your joint, I reckon."

"I reckon it is," and the boss looked at the innocent-appearing Chinaman and grinned.

Hop saw it, but he did not let on that he noticed it. It was simply going to be a repetition of what had happened many times before. The Chinaman was going to surprise those who took him for an easy mark. Chips were not to be obtained in the saloon, for Bad Man's Roost had not advanced as far as that yet, so when the cut for deal had been made, and Betts had won, the miner on his left pushed up a silver dollar for the ante. Hop sat next to him, and he promptly slipped up a five-dollar goldpiece.

"Me allee samee makee blindee," he chirped, as though it was customary for him to do such things.

"That's putty good," said the dealer, with a wink at Copper Dan. "I reckon ther heathen has played afore."

"Oh! it are most likely that he knows ther game," was the reply.

"Me knowee pletty goodee," Hop assured them. "Me allee samee winnee plenty money, so be, some times. But me losee pletty muchee, too."

"Well, it is all in life," one of the others observed, as he picked up the first card he received from the dealer and looked at it.

The cards being dealt, Betts looked at his own hand and then turned to the rest to see what they meant to do about the ante and blind. It so happened that no one had anything more than a pair, but they all came in just the same. Betts had dealt the cards fairly, because it was a new deck, and he had no chance to "fix" the cards.

But when it came to Copper Dan to deal something would be done. However, Hop came in for a deal ahead of him, and though they did not know it, something was going to happen then. Hop looked at his hand, and he made out that he was studying it deeply. He had a pair of deuces, which was certainly not very encouraging. "Well, heathen," said the dealer, "how many cards do yer want?"

"Me wantee askee lillee question," replied Hop, making out that he was puzzled. "If somebody havee two pair, and he allee samee takee one card and gittee um full hand, whattee lat beat?"

"Why, a full hand will beat three of a kind, or a flush."

"Allee light; me takee one card, len."

This was said so innocently that they all put him down as having two pair. He discarded one card and took the one dealt to him. It did not help his hand a bit, for it was an ace. But that made no difference to the clever Chinaman, as he did not expect to hold the best hand. But he did mean to win the pot, if it was possible.

They all drew three cards, save the dealer himself, who took the whole five. It happened that he got the best hand out, though it was but three tens. The miner next the dealer did not better his hand any, so he dropped out.

"Come, Heathen! It's your bet," said Betts.

"Allee light," was the reply. "Me allee samee bet fifty dollee."

They all looked at him as he counted out the money. It struck them very forcibly that he must hold a full hand. The next man threw down his cards, and then, after hesitating a minute, Copper Dan drew a bag of gold from his pocket and put down a hundred and fifty dollars.

"A hundred better, Heathen," he said, trying to appear perfectly at his ease.

The dealer dropped out then, leaving it to Hop and the leader of the camp.

"Me bettee allee samee two hundled dollee more, so be," said Hop, smiling in his bland and childish way.

Copper Dan looked at his hand. He had a pair of jacks. It occurred to him that it was useless to try and bluff the Celestial, so he threw down his hand, saying:

"Take ther money. I reckon you've got ther winnin' hand."

"Allee light," was the cheerful reply, and Hop raked in the pile.

One of the men gathered up his hand and looked at it. He turned to the rest and said:

"Why, ther heathen galoot only had a pair of deuces, boys!"

"Whattee you lookee at my cards for?" Hop demanded. "Lat none of your business. Me wantee play um square gamee, so be."

"All right," was the reply. "But we know that you're great on bluffin' now. Jest try that ag'in, an' maybe yer won't have sich good luck."

Copper Dan was astounded when he found that he had been bluffed out by the Chinaman. But he resolved to more than even up things when he got the chance to deal. He could stack the cards better than any of the miners in the game, and he meant to fix it so he would fleece Hop. But it was Hop's deal now, and when he took the cards he shuffled them in a way that seemed awkward. But really he was simply fixing them the way he wanted them. The four aces slipped up his sleeve, incidentally, and no one was the wiser.

Hop had selected Copper Dan as his victim, and he dealt him four kings, cold. What the rest got he did not care. The ante was a dollar, the same as before, no one going it blind this time, however. They all came in to draw cards, and when Hop dealt himself four they were those from his sleeve, which his sleight-of-hand enabled him to drop upon the top of the pack unobserved. Copper Dan had drawn one card, probably to make it appear that he was drawing for a flush, or a full hand. Two of the miners made small bets, but when Copper Dan lifted it to fifty dollars they all threw down their hands but Hop. He calmly raised it a hundred, and then Copper Dan came back at him for another hundred.

"Me makee fivee hundled better, so be," said the Chinaman, as he put up the money.

It was just then that the stagecoach drove up to the door, and as a tall man with a long mustache came swaggering in, the cry went up:

"Here comes the Two-Gun Man!"

CHAPTER V.—Wild Meets the Two-Gun Man.

When Young Wild West saw the stagecoach approaching along the trail that led into the mining camp he turned to his two partners and said:

"Come, boys! I reckon we may as well go down and see if the Two-Gun Man arrives. I am anxious to see what he looks like."

"That's right, Wild," Cheyenne Charlie answered. "I reckon ther gals will be all right here. Harvey an' Spooner is close by; an' it ain't likely that anybody will come up here ter interfere with 'em jest now. Ther stagecoach will keep 'em down there, most likely."

"Oh, yes," the young deadshot retorted. "I reckon that part will be all right. Come on, boys."

Wing, the cook, was already getting the dinner under way, but it would be half an hour or more before it would be ready, and as it was not more than five minutes' walk to the saloon, they would have time enough to take in what happened when the stagecoach arrived. They went on down and got there just as the four horses pulled up in front of the saloon.

"I reckon we'll go across the street and see who gets out," said Wild. "There is no use in waiting right here, for if the Two-Gun Man happens to be among the passengers he might take a notion to start a row right away. The fact that we always keep ourselves looking pretty neat makes some people take more than an ordinary notice of us. But I believe in wearing good clothes and keeping up in shape."

"That's right, Wild," Jim Dart answered. "Since we can afford it, there is no reason why we shouldn't keep ourselves up in shape."

Cheyenne Charlie said nothing, for he was busy watching the passengers, who were getting out of the stagecoach. One of them was a tall man, who wore a mustache similar to his own. He was rather roughly dressed; still there was an air about him that might have been called "sporty."

"I reckon that's ther Two-Gun Man, boys," he said. "Them others is ordinary miners. There's only four passengers ter come in to-day, it seems."

The man the scout picked out as the notorious fellow, who was so quick at using his guns with both hands, lost no time about entering the saloon. The other three passengers lingered outside, as they got their belongings together, showing that they were strangers in the mining camp. Wild led the way across the street, and as a shout went up inside he knew the man, who had just entered, was receiving a welcome. As our friends came in the new arrival was standing in the center of the room, his eyes turned upon those who sat around the table playing poker. The pile of money on the table and the innocent-looking Chinaman seemed to attract his attention most.

"What's goin' on, Dan?" he asked, breaking the silence that had followed the cheer of welcome he had received.

"A little game, Dank," was the reply. "Ther heathen is tryin' ter show us somethin' about ther game. He's jest raised me five hundred. What do yer think of that?"

"He's ther first Heathen Chinee I ever seen what had as much money as that. Jingo! but this is great! Go on an' play. I want ter see how yer make out."

The speaker did not notice our three friends at all. He was too much interested in the game for that. Acting on his advice to go ahead with the game, Copper Dan met the Chinaman's raise, and then he lifted it two hundred.

"Me gottee velly goodee hand, so be," Hop said,

shaking his head as though he meant it. "Me makee fivee hundled more!"

He produced the money, and the eyes of the lookers-on opened wide. They had never seen a Chinee with so much money before. The leader of the camp looked a bit uneasy when the raise came that time, for the truth was that his cash was getting down pretty low. He managed to produce enough to meet the raise, and then he shot a glance at Dank Howler, the Two-Gun Man, which was understood perfectly.

"Want some money, Dan?" the man asked, as he dove his hand in his pocket. "I reckon I kin 'commodate yer. I done a mighty good business over at ther Junction. Here's a couple of thousand. Yer kin give it back ter me at ther end of ther game, 'cause I may need it to-night."

"All right," Copper Dan answered, and he took the bag that was tendered him.

Then he quickly pulled out a thousand dollars from it, and, looking the Chinaman in the eyes, exclaimed:

"There yer are, Heathen! If yer want ter see what I've got, meet that!"

There was a hush for a second or two, and then the Chinaman caused a stir by saying:

"Allee light, Misler Melican Sport; me makee um thousand dollee more!"

Young Wild West and his partners had never seen the clever Chinaman going it quite as stiff as that, and they looked and waited with interest. They knew pretty well that he was going to win the pot, for Hop would never raise it a thousand for nothing.

"What are yer settin' there fur, Dan?" asked the Two-Gun Man. "Don't yer know how much your hand is worth?"

"Yes, Dank," was the reply. "I reckon it's worth callin' him, an' that's what I'm goin' ter do!"

Then he put in the other thousand that had been loaned to him, and, putting on a triumphant air, exclaimed:

"What have yer got, Heathen?"

"Me gottee four lillee aces!" was the bland retort, and then Hop dropped them, so he could see them and made a grab for the pot.

"Thunder!" gasped the leader of the camp. "An' I had four kings, too!"

"Four aces allee samee beatee four kings, so be, evely timee," piped Hop, his eyes almost closing as he turned them toward the ceiling. "Me finee lat outee when me first learnee to play, so be."

"Howlin' catamounts!" roared the Two-Gun Man, as he stepped over and slapped Copper Dan on the shoulder. "Are yer goin' ter let that slant-eyed galoot take ther money, Dan? Wake up! A gun will beat four aces!"

"Yes, I know," faltered the victim of the poker game, and then his eyes turned upon Young Wild West.

Dank Howler could hardly help following his gaze, and then for the first time he got a look at our hero.

"Who in thunder are you?" he asked. "It seems that Dan is afraid of you."

"Well, I don't know about that, my friend," Wild answered coolly. "But if he isn't, he ought to be. But I don't know as it is any of our business to interfere with that game. You loaned the loser money, and he is broke. Let him quit the game. The Chinaman is too much for him, that's all. There is no need of using a gun to beat his four aces. That wouldn't be a square deal."

"It wouldn't, eh? Well, if it was me what had lost a pile of money like that, you kin bet that there would be a dead heathen right here, providin' he didn't shell out. He stole them aces from the deck, that's sartin."

"Me takee four cards flom um top of um deck, so be, and me allee samee gittee um four aces," Hop declared, as he finished stuffing the money out of sight. "Me allee samee play pokee velly muchee fair."

But the Two-Gun Man paid no attention to what he said. He was too much occupied in looking the dashing young deadshot over just then. Probably he realized that he was looking at a boy who was something above the average in coolness and ability, and he hesitated.

"Who are you, young feller?" he again asked, after a rather lengthy pause.

"If it will do you any good to know, I'll tell you. I am Young Wild West."

"Ah! Now I know. You're ther young galoot I've always been anxious to meet ever since I heard of you. You are called the Champion Deadshot, I reckon?"

"Well, never mind about that. I don't want to have any trouble with you, or any one else. But that Chinaman happens to be in my employ, and I want him to have fair play. If he cheated in order to win that money that is his affair, not yours. The man who lost the money has not kicked, so why should you?"

The Two-Gun Man remained silent for a moment, and then he walked over to the bar.

"Give us a drink, Jake," he said. "I want everybody to drink on me, too. I've got money, I have. I made out putty good over to ther Junction, an' I'm goin' ter give this here camp ther benefit of some of it. I ain't lookin' fur no trouble jest now. But jest wait till I git some firewater in me, an' git steam up! Then things will begin ter hum in Bad Man's Roost! Wow! Put out ther pizen!"

Some of those present looked a little uneasy when they heard this. Dank Howler was sober now, and it was seldom that he got going when he was that way. He had to be "liquored up" pretty well before he got on his high horse. Hop was one of the first to get to the bar when the invitation was extended, and he stood there, smiling at the Two-Gun Man.

"What do yer want, Heathen?" the bad man asked, looking at him and frowning. "I didn't mean that you was ter be in this round. I never treated a Chinee in my life, an' I ain't goin' ter begin now."

"Allee light," and Hop stepped back as meek as a lamb.

Young Wild West shot a glance at his partners, and then all three walked outside.

"Hey!" roared Dank Howler, as he noticed their action. "Come back an' drink with me. When I ask a galoot ter drink I always means it. It ain't healthy fur 'em ter refuse, either, Young Wild West."

"Oh! I reckon it's healthy enough around here," was the cool retort. "You see, I don't drink

whisky myself, and neither does Jim Dart. There isn't anything else sold here in the line of drinks, so there's no use in our staying inside."

"Oh, I see. Yer don't drink tanglefoot, then? Well, that's mighty queer, I should say. S'pose yer come back an' try a drink, anyhow? There's got ter be a first time, yer know."

"Well, I am not ready for the first time just yet, so let it go at that, Mr. Howler."

Wild was standing right in the doorway, facing the man. Charlie and Jim had got outside. Suddenly Dank Howler's hands dropped, and the next instant there was a gun in both.

"I'm ther Two-Gun Man, Young Wild West!" he cried. "I shoot with both hands, I do. You may be ther Champion Deadshot of ther West, but I kin shoot all around yer, an' I know it. Now, then, I ask yer ter come in an' wet your palate with some tanglefoot rum. Are yer comin'?"

The revolvers were held loosely by the villain, and their muzzles pointed directly at the boy. But Wild was not the least disturbed.

"So you'd shoot me if I refused to drink with you, eh?" he said coolly.

"Well, I reckon I might give yer a sort of a haircut," was the reply. "I'm great on cuttin' hair, when I take a notion. You've got too much of it, anyhow. It makes yer look like a gal. I reckon I'll trim you up a little bit. Git out of ther way, you two galoots out there! I'm goin' ter trim Young Wild West's hair, jest ter show him what kind of a galoot I am."

He motioned with both hands to Charlie and Jim, and the very instant our hero saw they were no longer pointed his way he grabbed for the revolver at his right side and it leaped from the holster on a line with the man's heart.

"Drop your guns!" came the sharp command.

Down went both guns to the floor.

"I reckon yer caught me nappin', Young Wild West," said the Two-Gun Man, shrugging his shoulders, but remaining quite cool. "I sorter furgot who I was up ag'in. You've got me! But it's all right. Come an' have a cigar, if yer don't want ter drink. Jake keeps putty good smokes, I reckon."

"All right," answered the boy. "I reckon I will smoke with you. You seem to have considerable sense, after all. The next time you try to flash your guns on me you might not have as much of a show as you did just now. Just hearken to what I say."

"That's all right. Don't talk no more about it. I know what's what, 'cause I've been through ther mill. Jake, jest trot out that private box of cigars you've got there. Young Wild West an' his pards is goin' ter smoke."

Wild lowered his revolver and advised the Two-Gun Man to pick up those he had dropped so suddenly. Then all hands drank, save our friends, who took cigars. Cheyenne Charlie often took a little whisky, because he had been brought up in that way; but just then he felt that he had better stick to Wild and take what he did. Hop sat at the table where the poker game had been played, not saying a word. But he was doing considerable thinking, and when the Two-Gun Man had settled for the round he arose and walked up to the bar.

"Me wantee tleat, so be," he said, smiling at Jake, the proprietor. "Evelybody havee lillee dlink but um Two-Gun Man. Me allee samee um tlue blue sport, so be!"

Wild was not expecting this, but he could not help giving the Chinaman credit for it. Dank Howler's face turned all colors. Our hero was watching him closely, and he was ready for anything he might try to do. The Two-Gun Man glanced his way, and he knew this, for he was a man of pretty keen perception.

"All right, Mister Heathen," he said slowly. "I reckon turn about is fair play. Go ahead with your game."

Some of the miners hesitated about drinking with the Chinaman, but a nod from the villain caused them to pour out their drinks.

"I reckon I'll take a little tanglefoot this time, since Hop is treatin'," said Charlie, nodding to the boss. "He's only a heathen, I know, but there is thousands of worse white men than he is. Jest everybody put that down as straight."

The Two-Gun Man took it all with wonderful coolness. When the bill had been settled by Hop, he arose from the chair he had occupied while the drinks were being served, and, facing him, said:

"I reckon ther best way ter settle this is fur me an' you ter chuck dice fur ther crowd, an' then we'll both drink. What do yer say ter that, Heathen?"

"Allee light," was the reply. "Me likee thlow um dicee, so be."

"Good! Jake, jest give us ther bones."

The boss handed the leather cup that contained the three little cubes, and Hop and the Two-Gun Man got side by side. Our hero still kept a strict watch on the villain, for he had an idea that he was a very tricky one, and he was not going to allow him to get in any of his fine work. Hop did not attempt to cheat in the game, but threw out the dice after he had given them a good shaking in the cup. As luck would have it, he threw but seven. Howler laughed, and then he rolled out twelve.

"You're stuck," he said. "Now we'll all drink."

"Allee light; me no care. Me allee samee gotee plenty money, so be."

Hop smiled and looked at Copper Dan as he said this. The miner shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing. The round was furnished by the boss, and as Hop paid for it, our hero nodded to him and said:

"I reckon it's time to go back to the camp, Hop. Come on."

"Don't be in a hurry," spoke up Howler. "I want yer ter see me act after I git full of juice."

"Oh, we will be back again," was the reply; and then our friends left the saloon and went up the hill to the camp.

CHAPTER VI.—The Two-Gun Man and the Storekeeper.

The Two-Gun Man looked to be somewhat relieved after our friends had gone.

"A putty quick sort of a galoot, I should say," he remarked, as he turned to Copper Dan.

"I reckon so," was the reply. "You'd oughter seen what he done ter me."

"Well, yer look as though somethin' had hit yer. What was it—the boy's fist?"

"Yes, that's right. There ain't no use in tryin' ter git out of it. Everybody here seen it, without it was Jake."

"Oh, I seen it, too," spoke up the boss of the saloon. "I was lookin' out of ther door ter see ther hangin' take place."

"Hangin'?" Dank Howler queried. "Was there goin' ter be a hangin'—or was there one?"

"There was goin' ter be a double hangin', but it didn't take place, Dank," said Copper Dan, shaking his head. "Young Wild West stopped it."

"Ah! I see. Who was ther galoots that didn't hang, then?"

"Them two quiet galoots what's workin' ther claim up under ther cliff."

"Oh! Harvey an' Spooner, eh? What did they do that yer was goin' ter hang 'em?"

"Well, Rory Blake said as how they robbed ther money drawer in his store at daybreak this mornin'; an' that they shot at him twice as they was gittin' away. We all believed Blake, of course, so we ketched ther pair an' started ter lynch 'em in regular style."

"And Young Wild West happened to come along, an' he stopped it, eh?"

There was a peculiar glitter in the eyes of he Two-Gun Man as he spoke.

"Yes, but I reckon it was a good thing we didn't hang 'em, fur old Bill Harrigan come along after a while, an' he says as how he stayed in ther shanty with Harvey an' Spooner, an' that they wasn't out of it till about six this mornin'. Harrigan wouldn't tell a lie, yer know."

"Well, I don't believe he would. But where is Harrigan now?"

"There he goes inter ther store with a bundle of pelts that's heavy enough ter break ther back of an ordinary man," called out one of the miners.

"Good! I reckon I'll go over there putty soon an' have a talk with Harrigan an' Blake. Of ther two, I think Blake is ther liar. But that's all right. There's more ter be got by keepin' in with him than there would be ter stick to ther old hunter, or ther two galoots what's workin' ther claim under ther cliff."

"Or Young Wild West an' his gang, either," added Copper Dan.

"Jest leave that part of it ter me," and the Two-Gun Man smiled significantly. "I got it putty stiff from Young Wild West a little while ago, an' I jest had ter give in an' swaller ther pill. But that was because I acted ther same with him as I would with any ordinary galoot. I made a little mistake, that's all. Ther next time it will be different."

"You bet it will, Dank!" exclaimed one of the men, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the Two-Gun Man.

"Set out some more of yer pizen, Jake," roared the Two-Gun Man suddenly. "I reckon I've got ter work myself inter shape fur what's goin' ter happen afore I go ter bed to-night. Trot out ther stuff! I let Copper Dan have two thousand, an' he lost it. But that don't worry me a bit. Dan will pay it back some time. An' that heathen galoot will find that he ain't goin' ter leave Bad Man's Roost with ther pile he won to-day. Not much, boys!"

The miners grinned, for they knew that it would be nothing short of a miracle if Hop Wah did get away with the money. But they did not reckon on Young Wild West as much as they should, however. Dank Howler did not stop drinking, even for a few minutes, until he had swallowed half a dozen glasses of the liquor kept by Jake. Then he hitched up his trousers and made a beeline for the store. It happened that the old hunter was just settling up with Blake for the pelts he had sold and the goods he had purchased. There was no one else in the store but the young man employed by the storekeeper.

"Hello, Blake!" shouted the Two-Gun Man, as he rushed in like a cyclone and upset a couple of empty barrels, just to let it be known that he was around.

"Hello, Dank!" came the reply. "In town ag'in, eh?"

"Bet your life I am! Hello, Bill!" This to the old hunter.

"How are yer, Dank?" was the answer. "Gittin' on your high horse ag'in?"

"Yep! But I ain't goin' ter bother with you; I never does, as you know. You're an old man, an' I always respect gray hairs. But say! I want ter ask you two galoots a question. Which of you is ther liar?"

"Well, I ain't no liar, Dank Howler," retorted Harrigan, looking at him boldly. "I reckon I know what yer mean when yer ask ther question. Yer have heard about ther double hangin' that didn't take place. I'll tell yer right plain to your face that them two fellers from under ther cliff didn't rob Blake. I know they didn't, an' that settles it!"

"Then, Blake, it must be you. Yer lied when yer said they done it, didn't yer?"

"Well, I made a mistake, that's all. I thought it was them," retorted the storekeeper.

"Well, yer are excused then. All of us is liable ter make mistakes. I made one myself not many minutes ago. I knowed it right away, too, an' that's why I am here now. Young Wild West made me drop both of my guns! What do yer think of that?"

Blake certainly was surprised to hear this.

"That boy is goin' ter make a heap of trouble here in ther camp if somethin' don't happen ter him putty quick," he said, shaking his head. "I don't know what your feelin's toward him is, Dank; but I know what mine is."

"If yer both take my advice, you'll let him alone," spoke up the old hunter, as he gathered up his purchases and walked out. "Young Wild West is ther genuine article, if I'm any jedge. He's all right, an' he's as square as they make 'em."

"It ain't nothin' ter you, Bill!" retorted the Two-Gun Man. "Go on an' 'tend to ther business you've got on hand."

"All right. I ain't sayin' no more. I've had my put in, an' that's enough jest now."

Out he went, showing that he was about as independent as any man in the camp. For some reason he had been treated right by the bad element of Bad Man's Roost, and as he never

showed up oftener than once in two or three weeks, he was allowed to do as he pleased. Bill Harrigan never drank anything strong, so he had nothing to induce him to stop at Jake's saloon. When he had gone, the Two-Gun Man leaned over the counter and, placing his lips close to the ear of Blake, he said in a whisper:

"Rory, me an' you has always been friends, ain't we?"

"Yes, Dank, we sartinly have," was the reply.

"I ain't never done a thing ter interfere with your business, have I?"

"No, Dank, yer ain't."

"Yer kin trust me, can't yer?"

"Sartinly I kin."

"Well, jest tell me what your game is, then. Maybe I kin help yer out some."

"What do yer mean, Dank?"

"You know what I mean. What did yer try ter git them two galoots hung fur?"

The face of the storekeeper reddened.

"Well," said he, after a pause, "I reckon I might as well tell yer. That double claim they're workin' is worth a fortune. There ain't been no claim filed fur it yet, an' if they was out of ther way I might git hold of it. I reckon you understand now, Dank."

"Ah! Jest about what I thought! But how do yer know that ther ground they're workin' is worth so much?"

"I've been around there tryin' when they wasn't there."

"Well, I sorter reckon that if any one knows, you do, Rory Blake. You've been around ther gold diggin's long enough ter know, anyhow."

"I do know, Dank Howler. Now, see here. Since I've told you this, I'll make a proposition ter you, right now, too!"

"Go ahead with your proposition."

"I'll give you half of what's there, providin' yer help me git hold of that double claim up under ther cliff."

"It's a go, Rory! Put your hand there!"

The two villains shook hands over the rough board counter.

"In order ter git that claim, ther two galoots has got ter be disposed of," said the storekeeper, holding his grip upon the Two-Gun Man's hand. "An' this boy they call Young Wild West has got ter git his medicine, as well as his two pards."

"That's sartin, Rory."

"As ter ther gals what's with 'em, that's ter be figured out later on."

"Gals!" echoed Howler. "Is there any gals with 'em?"

"Three of 'em, an' one is as fine a lookin' gal as ever lived, Dank."

"Jumpin' catamounts! I didn't know that, Rory! Say! But jest leave it ter me, as far as ther gals is concerned, especially ther good-lookin' one. I'm a regular lady-killer, I am! I'm ther Two-Gun Man, but that don't go ter say that I ain't got no heart. Wow! Look out fur me! I'm gittin' ready ter break loose!"

Then he caught the storekeeper by the arms and dragged him over the counter. Out of the store they went, and not until he had him before the bar in the saloon did the Two-Gun Man release his grip.

CHAPTER VII.—Placer Mining.

When Wild and his partners got back to the camp they found that Wing had a very fine meal waiting for them. Hop had accompanied them, rather glad of the chance to get away from the saloon, for he had won a big pile of money from Copper Dan and he wanted to keep it. The girls listened in surprise when Wild told about it.

"He should not be allowed to keep it, Wild," Arietta said. "He won it by cheating."

"That's right, Et," was the reply. "But since the men he was playing with were trying to cheat him, I suppose it is all right. Copper Dan meant to fleece him, but it turned out directly the opposite. That's the size of it, so I shan't make him give back the money. I suppose the villains will try hard to get it, however. The Two-Gun Man let Copper Dan have a couple of thousand, and Hop got that in a hurry. They will be trying to rob Hop now, and the chances are that they will kill him to do it, providing, of course, they get the chance."

"Well, be careful, Wild. We couldn't afford to lose Hop, you know."

"Oh! we are not going to lose him just yet. I reckon the Two-Gun Man will find out that he isn't half what he thinks he is, if he keeps fooling with us. He is nothing more than a big, blustering scoundrel, who knows how to shoot with both hands, and can do it accurately, no doubt. But when he finds out thoroughly that there are others who are just as quick as he is, and a little bit quicker, he will come to his senses."

"He ought ter know that by this time," chuckled Cheyenne Charlie.

Then he related what happened when our hero and the Two-Gun Man met in the saloon. After they had eaten dinner Harvey and Spooner came over to find out how they made out when they went down to witness the arrival of the stagecoach. Charlie started in to tell them, so no one else said anything until he had finished. The two miners were amazed, but pleased, as well.

"So you made him drop his two guns after he had pulled them, did you?" said Spooner, looking at the dashing young deadshot with admiring eyes. "I guess that was a sort of surprise for the Two-Gun Man."

"Well, he did act that way, though he seems to be a pretty cool hand. He took it good-naturedly, which probably was a good thing. I never want to shoot a man if I can possibly help it. But if I had been compelled to shoot when he had a gun in each hand it would have been to kill. There was no other way out of it."

"Maybe this will tame him down a little," spoke up Harvey. "I hope it does, for I am willing to forgive him for what he has done to me."

"Oh! that won't do him a bit of good," declared Cheyenne Charlie, shaking his head. "That galoot is wise enough ter back down when he knows he has ter; but when ther time comes that he thinks he's got things his own way he'll let loose. That's ther kind of a hairpin he is, an' you kin bet all you're worth on it!"

"I rather think you are right," Harvey answered. "He don't seem to be the kind of man to give up."

"Well, if he keeps at it he'll give up all right."

"Most likely; but not the way he wants to, I suppose."

Charlie smiled grimly.

"No, not that way," he answered.

After a while the conversation turned to the double claim the two men owned.

"I reckon we'll go and have a look at your placer," our hero observed.

"Certainly. You shall see all there is to it. And then you can give us your opinion of it, if you don't mind," said Harvey.

"All right. I'll do that willingly."

They all walked over to the spot where the miners had struck the gold dust they were accumulating, leaving the two Chinamen in charge of the camp. Wild was not long in satisfying himself that there was a small fortune there, to say the least. But the best part of it was that it could be made in a few days, providing some hard work was done. A stream of water trickled from a split in the rocky face of the cliff not more than a dozen yards away, and when he had sized up the lay of the land, the young deadshot looked at the two miners and said:

"You are filling your pans with dirt here, and then you carry them over to the brook. Now, why don't you fetch the brook right here, and let it do more than half the work for you?"

"Bring it here!" echoed Harvey, looking at him in amazement.

"Yes; why not? You won't have to dig any deeper than three feet any part of the way. Get your shovels and picks, boys. You have got quicksilver, I suppose?"

"Yes, we've got some," Spooner answered. "But we have had no use for it here, so far."

"Well, you can use it with good advantage now, I reckon. While you are digging the trench we will make a sluice-box for you. Then I reckon you'll hustle the gold from this placer. We don't mind putting a few hours helping out, do we, boys?"

This question was put to Charlie and Jim, and they promptly answered that they did not. The two young men, who had struck it rich by coming to Bad Man's Roost, were glad to receive instructions from Young Wild West and his partners, for they did not know as much about mining gold as they might.

Wild and his partners now pitched in and helped the two men at their work. It was so late when the work was given up for the day that Wild told the two that they need not bother about cooking their own supper but to come and join them.

"We have a cook hired for the purpose," he said. "And I reckon there's plenty of grub on hand. We had pretty good luck at shooting game yesterday, and it might as well be eaten up before it gets the chance to spoil."

"Well, I know we are welcome, so we'll accept the invitation," Spooner answered. "Isn't that right, Jack?"

"Yes, that's right," was the reply.

For a wonder, Hop had remained around the camp all the afternoon. Probably he was a little afraid to go down to the saloon, since he knew that Copper Dan and the Two-Gun Man had it in for him, on account of the pile of money he had won in the poker game.

"Misler Wild," he said, as Wild was drying himself with a towel, after a good wash in the brook, "you go to um saloon to-night?"

"Well, I might take a run down that way," was the retort. "Why do you want to know?"

"Me likee go, too, so be."

"Well, I reckon you can go, if you'll give me your word that you'll keep sober."

"Me do lat, Misler Wild," and the Celestial shook his head earnestly. "Me be velly goodee Chinee. Maybe me makee lillee fun for um miners, lat allee."

"Oh, you will have to do something, I suppose," spoke up Arietta. "You couldn't live long if you were not up to some kind of foolish business, or gambling."

Hop bowed, just as though he took what the girl said as a great compliment. After the supper was over it was talked over, and the decision was that Wild, Charlie, Jack Harvey and Hop were to take a walk down and see how the Two-Gun Man and the rest of their enemies were getting along. Jim and Phil Spooner would stay at the camp with Wing and the girls. Our hero had no idea that the villains would attempt to bother any of them, so he felt that it was perfectly safe to arrange it this way. But he did not know what kind of men he had to deal with, as the sequel will prove.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Plot Keeps Growing.

When the afternoon drew to a close the Two-Gun Man was not so drunk as he usually was, which was somewhat of a surprise to even his friends. The cause of his being this way was that he had made up his mind to keep sober enough to carry out a certain scheme that he and the villainous storekeeper had laid out during the afternoon. After having agreed to go shares on the double claim, the two met again, and then it was that they decided to take Copper Dan in their confidence and let him help them. But what Howler wanted most was the girl Blake had told him about.

He had never seen her, but he took it for granted that she was beautiful, and the fact that she was Young Wild West's sweetheart, which fact he learned from some one, was quite sufficient to make him want to get her in his power. Toward night he insisted on going to have a look at the girls, and with Copper Dan he set out. It was quite easy for them to approach the spot without being seen, and the villain got his desire.

"Ther yaller-haired one fur me, Dan," he whispered. "You'll have ter send an' git a parson here right away. You're ther leader of ther camp, an' I say that a parson is needed here! I want ter git married. Do yer hear what I say, Dan?"

"I hear yer," was the reply. "Yer kin bet we'll manage ter git a parson here, even if we have ter make one out of some galoot. I admire your taste on ther gal, Dank. But if things turns out right, an' she's willin', I'll take ther oldest one of ther three."

"They said down to Jake's that she was ther married one. Cheyenne Charlie is her husband."

"Well, that don't make no difference. Ain't it settled that Cheyenne Charlie is goin' ter be

killed, along with ther rest? She'll be a widder then. I reckon she might be mighty glad ter look fur an offer of marriage from me then."

The Two-Gun Man grinned at this. He knew that Copper Dan was anything but handsome, and he also knew that to marry either of the girls it would have to be done by force. The two villains noticed that the miners were getting along nicely, with the assistance of our friends; but they were not close enough to see just how much dust they were getting out of the sluice.

"A good-payin' claim, I reckon," remarked Copper Dan, as they turned to go back. "It ain't no wonder that Blake wants it. I'd like ter have it myself."

"Well, you'll git a share out of it," replied Howler.

The two went back and joined Blake at the store. As the miners quit work for the day and flocked to the saloon, they were surprised to see it so quiet around, for it had leaked out that the Two-Gun Man was in town. The majority of them were so much afraid of him that they took care to get out of his way, especially when he had been drinking. The villain had started in to drink, but when the scheme was brought forward he tapered down, and now as the sun was disappearing behind the mountains in the distance, he was quite sober, and waiting for the chance to abduct the girl. When our hero and the scout, accompanied by Jack Harvey and Hop, came down and began conversing with a group of miners in front of Jake's saloon, the Two-Gun Man was watching from Blake's store.

"Great lizards!" he exclaimed. "Look there, Rory. There's Young Wild West now."

The storekeeper hurried to his side, and then they both peered out of the window.

"They're all there but two an' a Chinaman," Blake observed, with a satisfied nod. "I reckon there couldn't be a better time than now, Dank."

"Yer mean ter take possession of ther double claim an' git ther gals?"

"Yes."

"That's jest what I think. I'll go an' git Copper Dan. I reckon ther two of us kin do it, all right."

"But yer want ter look out fur that other boy, Dank. He's one what's up there. As far as Spooner is concerned, he don't amount ter nothin'. But look out fur ther other galoot."

"All right. I'm off!"

"I'd go with yer, if I didn't have ter stay in ther store jest now. Anyhow, somebody ought ter be here ter watch Young Wild West."

The Two-Gun Man looked at him sharply when he said this. Then a peculiar smile flitted across his face for a moment, and he turned and went out. But that remark of the storekeeper's set him thinking hard.

"Blake is a very foxy galoot," he muttered, as he passed behind a grove of pines, on his way to Copper Dan's shanty. "He wants us ter take all ther risk an' let him have his share in what we git. Not by a jugful! Blake, you're a mighty smart galoot, but you kin count yourself out, I reckon. I'll see Dan, an' then we'll git a couple of ther boys ter help us. We'll take them gals over to a cave I know about, an' keep 'em there till ther excitement blows over. Of course we'll have ter wipe out Young Wild West an' them what's down here with him, after we do ther other job, but that kin be done easy, fur we'll jest lay fur 'em an' pop 'em over as they come runnin' up ther hill. This is Bad Man's Roost, all right; an' I'm ther Two-Gun Man!"

The villain had quickly worked himself in a state of mind that made him feel as though the plot could not fail to work. He was not long in reaching the shanty of Copper Dan. It was a small affair, but quite large enough to answer the miner's purpose. It happened that the owner was in when the Two-Gun Man arrived. Also that he had two of his cronies with him. One was the fellow called Betts and the other bore the name of Grubb. Howler knew them all, of course.

"Hello, boys!" he said, nodding and grinning, as he shut the door. "There's somethin' on hand."

"I thought maybe we might want a little help, Dank, so I invited Betts an' Grubb over. Yer don't have ter take 'em in on ther game if yer don't want ter. All I've promised 'em is a share of the money ther Heathen Chinee has got, after ours is took out first."

"Good! They kin have that, an' maybe a little more," Dank answered. "See here, boys! I've made up my mind ter throw Blake out of ther game entirely. He's too much of a coward ter suit me."

"Why, I always thought you an' Blake was sich good friends," said Copper Dan, showing no little surprise.

"So we have been; but when he says fur me an' you ter go ahead an' do ther work, while he stays in his store an' 'tends ter his business, I reckon he's a downright coward. He's got a feller he kin leave in charge of ther store, if he wanted ter go very bad. Ther trouble is that he don't mean ter be mixed up in ther game in case it don't pan out right. He's lookin' out fur himself, yer see. But if it does pan out, he'll take possession of ther double claim, an' he says it's worth a lot of money. That means that he'll be able ter give us what he thinks is right, an' not a bit more."

"Well, if that's ther case, leave him out, I say," Copper Dan answered.

"Blake always has been fur himself, an' nobody else, ever since I knowed him," Betts spoke up.

"That's a sure thing," Grubb added, ready to side in with them, no matter what they said. "Yer kin depend on me, Dank. I'd stick ter you an' Dan through anything."

"That's ther way ter talk!" exclaimed the Two-Gun Man. "Well, I'll tell yer what's goin' ter be done, then: It's goin' ter be done right away, too! Young Wild West an' ther tall galoot is out in front of Jake's now. Harvey is there with 'em, an' so is ther smart Chinee what won so much money from Dan. That means that there ain't no one in ther camp with ther three gals but ther other boy an' Spooner. Of course there's a heathen there, but he don't count fur anything. We'll hang him up by his pigtail an' riddle him with bullets, jest fur a warnin' ter other heathens that might come here. Now then I want ter git them three gals an' take 'em to a cave that I know of. We must do it kinder quick, too, fur Young Wild West won't be long in gittin' up there, if there's any shootin' done."

CHAPTER IX.—Wild and Charlie to the Rescue.

The girls sat watching the sun as it gradually sank below the distant ridge. Wing was busy washing up the tincups and plates that had been used for the supper, and Jim Dart and Spooner were talking about the rich placer that was being worked. It was one of the kind of evenings that are so common in that part of New Mexico. There was an air of tranquillity and peace about the scene. But danger was lurking, for all that. Finally the sun went down and then the darkness began to deepen right away.

"I reckon we had better keep a watch," said Jim, as he came over to where the girls were sitting. "There are plenty of villains here, and there is no telling what they might take a notion to do. Everything seems to be all right down there, for I have heard no shooting yet. The Two-Gun Man must be on his good behavior."

From the camp they could not see down upon the group of shanties below, but from the shanty occupied by Spooner and his pard they could. Arietta took a notion to go up the slight rise of ground and see if her dashing young lover was in sight. It was not yet dark enough to prevent this, if he was outside anywhere, so she got up and walked along the little brook that had been changed from its course. The scout's wife quickly followed her.

"Where are you going?" Jim asked them.

"Only as far as the shanty," Arietta answered. "We want to look down and see if Wild and Charlie are anywhere in sight."

"I'll go, too, if you don't object," said Spooner. "I am a little anxious about Jack."

They did not object, so off they went, leaving Jim and Eloise practically alone, for Wing had just finished cleaning up, and he was now settling down for a nap. Eloise had formerly been a very delicate girl, but the months of life in the open air had changed her so that she was now as rugged and healthy as could be. Her parents being dead, and the only relatives she had living far away in Minnesota, the girl was quite content to place herself under the charge of the scout's wife, who acted much the same as an elder sister might have done. Of course when she got a little older she would wed Jim Dart, and then she would have him to guide and care for her. But just then there were no thoughts of marrying in the minds of the couple. Of course it might have been called courting, and if it was it was surely the very happy time of their lives.

"Jim," said Eloise, as she looked at the deepening shadows, "if half of those who live in our great country only knew of the pleasures and benefits to be derived from the sort of life we are leading this great wilderness would no longer be called a part of the Wild West. It would be so thick with camping-out parties that the bears and other animals would all run to their hiding places."

"And if they did not do that, they would soon be shot down, so there would be no more game," Dart answered, with a laugh. "But you are right in what you say, Eloise. Few people know what a free life in the open air of the mountains and plains means. But that is all right. Every one to his own fancy."

Eloise was just going to make a reply when a scream rang out. It surely came from the direction of the shanty, and in an instant the boy and girl were on their feet. The first thing that Jim saw was Spooner running toward them, a man with upraised knife in hot pursuit, and so near him that the gain of another step would enable him to use the knife. Dart never thought long before he acted. He knew what to do right away. Out came his revolver. A short, quick aim and—Crack! The man with the knife uttered a shriek of agony and fell to the ground.

"They have got Arietta and Mrs. Anna!" cried Spooner, just as though he had been unable to speak before. "There were four of them. One caught me, but I broke away from him. He knocked my gun from my hand as I was going to shoot him, and then I turned and ran."

Dart waited to hear no more. He leaped over the brook and ran like the wind in the direction he knew the villains must have taken. As he reached the shanty a revolver cracked and a bullet whizzed past his head. But Jim never stopped. He was just as anxious to save Anna and Arietta as he would have been if his own sweetheart was there. Jim ran along until he reached the point where the cliff ended. Then, as luck would have it, he stumbled over a stone and fell heavily to the ground. Rendered unconscious by the fall, for his head struck the hard ground with great force, the boy lay there for the space of five minutes. Then he gradually came to, and, sitting up, he rubbed his head and found a bump there the size of an egg. It all came to him quickly enough, and resolving to find where the villains had taken Arietta and Anna, he got upon his feet. It was just then that the voice of Young Wild West called out:

"What's the matter, Jim?"

"Eh? Oh! Hello, Wild!" gasped the boy, as he saw the young deadshot approaching. "They carried Arietta and Anna off!"

"So Spooner just said," was the cool reply, for the boy did not show any great excitement. "No wonder the Two-Gun Man and Copper Dan were not to be seen around the saloon. We heard a couple of shots, as well as a scream, for things happened to be quiet down there just then; and then we made a bee-line for the camp. You dropped one of the galoots, I see."

"Yes, and then I stumbled and fell. I hit my head on a stone, I guess. Go and find them, Wild. I'll follow as soon as I get myself together."

"All right, Jim. I hope you'll soon be all right. Come on, Charlie!"

The scout was not a little excited, but he would not go ahead without first listening to what his young leader said. They hurried along around the point of the cliff, treading noiselessly, for they knew they could not hope to gain anything by making a noise. If the villains were anywhere close by they might be waiting to get a chance to shoot them down. Things could hardly have been better for them, for they had not covered more than a couple of hundred yards when they heard footsteps. Wild held up his hand and Charlie instantly stopped in his tracks. Down went the boy in a crouching position and the scout quickly followed his example. They were not a bit too soon, for three forms suddenly appeared close to

them. Though it was now quite dark, our hero recognized two of them as the Two-Gun Man and Copper Dan.

"We'll git down there now," the latter said just then. "Ther gals is safe in ther cave till we settle with ther rest of 'em. It's too bad that Grubb had ter git shot."

"If they only knowed that ther cave where ther gals is was so close by they might find 'em easy. All they would have ter do would be ter pull ther big rock over, an' then they could go right in. I kin see ther rock from here, Dank."

"Well, never mind about that. Come on! Let's git down ter Jake's," was the impatient reply.

They moved away and soon were hurrying down the hill. Wild had been letting his hand rest upon the scout's arm to prevent him from shooting the three villains, and he now took it away.

"We will go and get the girls," he said, in a whisper. "We will attend to the three galoots afterward."

"All right," replied Charlie. "I reckon you know what ter do, Wild."

When Copper Dan said he could see the rock that hid the entrance to the cave from view Wild's eyes turned that way, of course. He, too, saw it. Quickly the two made their way to the spot.

"Here we are!" said our hero. "Lend a hand, Charlie."

The two got hold of the rock, and, giving a pull, turned it over. An opening was disclosed.

CHAPTER X.—Ready for the "Cleaning Up."

The four villains had certainly worked their plans well, as far as the first part of it went. They were hiding behind the shanty when Anna and Arietta approached, with the miner close behind them. It did not take the Two-Gun Man long to make up his mind that it would be the best thing they could do to get the two girls and dispose of Spooner at the same time. The scoundrel called Grubb elected himself to the job of using his knife on the man, while the rest turned their attention to the girls. It was Arietta who gave the scream, but her mouth was quickly covered, and with her arms pinned to her sides she was carried away bodily. Anna did not even have the chance to utter a cry, for she was caught by Copper Dan the fraction of a second before Howler seized Arietta.

As the two girls were being borne away by the villains they heard the crack of a revolver. They thought Spooner had been shot. But when they heard their captors talking they soon knew better. It was one of their number who had fallen. Arietta quickly recovered from the surprise, but Anna was in a state of terror until the cave was reached. When she had been carried through the rather small opening, and the third man of the villains struck a match, she caught a glimpse of Arietta's face. The girl shot a glance at her which meant that she must keep up her courage, and this had the effect of making her brace up, so to speak.

"There's a lantern here somewheres," the Two-Gun Man said, as he looked around the cave. "There it is over there, Betts. Jest light it. We won't leave ther beauties in ther dark, even if we do tie 'em an' gag 'em."

Neither of the girls had seen the Two-Gun Man, but somehow they guessed that it was he. The lantern was found to have oil in it, and when it was lighted it sent a sickly glow through the cave, which was one of the sort that are formed in about all shapes imaginable. The girls were dragged around an angle, so they could be left in a place where the light could not be seen from the entrance, and then Betts proceeded to bind them with a rope, while his companions held them securely. Then their own handkerchiefs were taken from them and turned into gags, so they were unable to call out or scream. Copper Dan made sure that everything was all right with them, and then he said:

"Now you gals take it easy fur a while. It won't be very long afore we bring ther other one here. Then you'll be all right. But don't think that you'll ever see Young Wild West, or his pards, any more."

Arietta shot a defiant glance at him. She had been placed in such predicaments before, and she had noted the way they had been tied by the villains. It was a very clumsy way, and she knew that there was a chance to get free, if they were only left to themselves for a while. The way Copper Dan spoke led her to believe that they would be, too.

"Are they all right, Dan?" asked Howler, who seemed anxious to get out of the cave.

"Yes, Dank," was the reply.

"You're sure they can't holler, or git away?"

"They couldn't, not if they tried a whole week," was the retort.

"All right, then. Let's git out of here. We want to git down to Jake's an' be ready fur what's likely ter happen."

Arietta was not a little relieved when the three villains took their departure. They left the lantern on the ground, turned down rather low, but there was light enough from it for the girls to see. When their footsteps had died out, Arietta set herself at work to get her hands free. The rope cut into her wrists as she tugged away, but she was not to be balked by that. Seeing what she was up to, Anna tried the same thing. But she was not as persistent as her young companion, and soon gave it up as a hopeless task. Arietta kept at it steadily, and at the expiration of three minutes she acquired the desired result. The first thing she did was to tear the gag from her mouth.

It took less than a minute for her finishing removing the bonds from herself, and then she turned her attention to her companion. It was just then that they heard footfalls in the cave. That the villains were coming back seemed certain, so they hurriedly threw themselves down to make out that they were as helpless as they had been when left there. But the next minute who should enter that part of the cave but Wild and Charlie! The girls sprang to their feet so quickly that our hero and the scout were amazed.

"Great gimlets!" exclaimed Charlie. "How did yer git loose, gals?"

"They did not tie us as well as they thought they did," was Arietta's cool reply.

"I reckon them galoots ain't been used ter this kind of business, Wild," observed the scout, as he

looked at the ropes that lay upon the ground. "They didn't make a very good job of it when they tied ther gals."

"That's right," was the reply. "They would have come on out without any help from us, I reckon. But it is all right, anyhow. Now we'll go back to the camp, and a little later we'll go down and do business with the Two-Gun Man and his crowd."

Leaving the lantern where it was, the four walked out of the cave. It took less than three minutes to get back to the camp, and once there they found Jim all right, save that he had a good bump on his head. The two miners were there, and they were not a little frightened over what had happened. But our hero quickly assured them that everything was going to be all right, and they became more calm.

"We are going down to clean up the mining camp in a few minutes," the boy went on, in his cool and easy way. "I reckon it needs it badly. The Two-Gun Man will be the one we'll tackle first. Then Copper Dan will get what is coming to him."

"Where is Hop?" asked Arietta, as she missed him.

"I don't know; but it is most likely that he is down at the saloon," our hero answered. "But that is all right. I hardly believe the villains will interfere with him. He knows enough to keep out of their way."

"You are going to start the cleaning to-night, then?" asked Spooner.

"Yes; there is no better time, I reckon."

"Do you want us to help?"

"Well, I want you to go down there with us. I want everybody but Wing. We will leave him in charge. The girls will go to the store, as though they want to purchase something. But they will really see to it that Blake don't get away. I'll leave that galoot to you, Et. You know what to do if it comes to the point."

"I know, Wild," was the reply.

The two girls looked at the brave girl with admiring eyes. Neither of them possessed half the courage and determination that she did, and they knew it. Wing now knew that everything was all right again, so he went over near the tents, and taking a reclining position on the ground, dropped off to dozing again. But Wild quickly roused him.

"We are going to leave you in charge, you sleepy heathen," he said. "I want you to keep awake till we get back. If any one comes here and bothers you, just shoot them. Do you hear what I say?"

"Me undelstandee, Misler Wild," was the reply. "Me allee samee keepee 'wakee, so be. Me shoot allee same better lan my blother, so be."

"Well, I believe you can. But you want to use lead in your gun."

"Me allee samee gottee plenty lead in um gun, so be."

Wing was now very much awake, and, pulling his revolver, he carried it in his hand, while he started pacing back and forth after the manner of a sentry. Wild now told his companions to get ready for the descent upon the bad mining camp.

"The cleaning up is about to begin," he said. 'I want every one to keep his eyes open."

They all understood, and five minutes later they were making their way down the hill toward the saloon and other shanties near it.

CHAPTER XI.—The "Cleaning Up" Begins.

As our friends neared the saloon, shouts and laughter could be heard. The music of a violin came to their ears, too, which showed that a "high old time" was in progress.

"I reckon they're celebratin' what they done," said Cheyenne Charlie.

"It seems so," Wild replied. "Well, let them go ahead for a while. We'll try and look in and see what's up before we enter."

They went direct to the store, and when Wild had peered through the door and found that Blake and his clerk were alone there, he told the girls to go on in.

"Keep him busy showing you different things for a while," the boy said. "We'll go over to the saloon."

"You can depend on us," was Arietta's reply.

Just then Hop came around the corner.

"Me wantee go in um store, too, so be," he said.

"All right, Hop," Wild answered. "But where have you been?"

"Me allee samee watchee um Two-Gun Man and um other bad mans, Misler Wild."

"You did, eh? Well, did you learn anything?"

"Me hear um say ley gottee two girls in um cave, but ley mustee lie, for um girls here, so be."

"That's right. They do lie when they say that, but they think they have got them, just the same. But what are they going to do next?"

"Um Two-Gun Man say lat ley wantee shootee you pletty soonee."

"He did, eh? Well, he'll have the chance in a very few minutes, I reckon. But it will be a slim chance, though."

Hop followed the girls into the store. Blake looked surprised when he saw who his customers were.

"Good evening, ladies," he said politely. "What can I do for you?"

"Velly nicee evening, so be," remarked Hop, before the girl could make a reply.

The storekeeper frowned.

"Have you got anything in the line of ribbons and calico?" Arietta asked.

"No," was the retort. "Yer see, there ain't been no wimmen-folks here, an' I didn't stock up with anything like that. I've got pins an' needles, an' spools of thread, an' sich, though."

"Well, let's see what you have got."

The clerk stepped forward to wait upon them, but Blake waved him back. He wanted the pleasure of waiting on the pretty customers himself, no doubt. But he was wondering what the Two-Gun Man and Copper Dan had been doing all this time, as he had learned but a few minutes before that they had just showed up over in the saloon. Hop was in the humor to have a little fun with the rascally storekeeper, and he pushed his way to the front and began examining the different articles he put out on the counter.

"Do you want to buy anything, Heathen?" came the query.

"Me wantee buy um paper of pins, so be," was the reply.

"All right. Twenty-five cents will pay fur it."

Hop took a paper of pins; but he did not offer to pay for it. The girls were amused, for they knew that the clever Chinaman was up to something.

"Where's ther money?" Blake demanded, as the pins disappeared under the Chinaman's coat.

"Oh, me allee samee forgittee!"

Then Hop handed him a lead quarter. The storekeeper looked at it, scowled fiercely, and handed it back.

"I don't take lead money," he said.

"You allee samee keepee um store in Bad Man's Loost, and you havee plenty bad mans here, but you no takee bad money! Lat velly muchee stlange, so be."

Seeing that the girls were now laughing, Blake cooled down a little.

"All right," he said. "Keep the paper of pins, if you can't give me good money."

Hop took a couple of cigars from his pocket and, handing one to the astonished man, said:

"Havee lillee smoke, so be."

"Well, I don't mind if I do."

The rascally storekeeper evidently thought he might as well have something in payment for the paper of pins, and a cigar was surely worth as much. Hop calmly struck a match and handed it to him. Blake accepted it and lighted the cigar. Then Hop started his own cigar going, at the same time motioning the girls to step back a little. But they knew what was coming. The Chinaman had played that trick so many times that it was old to them. But it was always bound to create a laugh at that. A loaded cigar is bound to surprise the person who tries to smoke it. It was surely a loaded one that Hop had given Blake. The clever Chinaman had a way of fixing up an ordinary cigar that would surprise any one.

Sometimes he used common gunpowder and sometimes the powder that makes what is called colored fire when it is lighted. Blake's cigar contained some of this. Hop took pains to buy such stuff every time he came to a city or town where such things were sold, and he always managed to keep a good stock on hand. Blake puffed away at his cigar, while the girls made out that they were looking at some needles. The clerk sat on a barrel a few feet behind his boss. Suddenly there was a hissing sound and a stream of red fire shot out of the cigar. Blake let out a howl of fear and sprang back, striking the clerk and overturning the barrel he was sitting upon. Down upon the floor went both, while the cigar, which had dropped, continued to spout red fire directly toward them.

The girls laughed so heartily that Blake's alarm turned to rage. He got upon his feet and jumped upon the trick cigar, mashing it and extinguishing the fire.

"Is that what yer come in here fur, you heathen?" he exclaimed, placing his hand on the butt of a revolver that protruded from his hip pocket. "I'll——"

"Hold on!" interrupted Arietta, leveling her revolver at him. "You are not going to shoot him. You just let go that gun or I'll drop you, Mr. Blake!"

Obeying the command, the villain stepped back and looked at the girl in amazement.

"Wha—what does this mean?" he gasped.

"It means that you are going to get your medicine," was the cool answer. "Young Wild West is going to give this mining camp a cleaning up, and I think you will take a part in it. You just sit down there and keep perfectly still. Hop, just take his revolver from him."

"Allee light, Missy Alietta," and the Chinaman did as directed. "You havee 'nothee smokee, Misler Blake?"

It was just then that revolvers began cracking across the street in the saloon, while yells of laughter were heard. The girls were listening, and they knew that Wild had not started in yet. Blake's clerk started to leave the store.

"You sit down, too!" said Arietta sternly.

The storekeeper's face was very pale now. It was evident that he realized that it was all up with him.

"Let up on me, gal," he said feebly. "So long as nothin' has come out of it, let it drop, won't yer?"

"I haven't got the say about that. Wait till Young Wild West gets through over there across the street. Then he'll come here and attend to your case."

Blake began to plead like a whipped child. But it was no use. He even made a clean breast of the whole plot, though it was not asked for. But this only made the girls realize what a scoundrel he was. Pretty soon a shout sounded outside, and then they knew that the cleaning up had begun. Arietta told Anna and Eloise to go and see what was taking place, while she kept the storekeeper sitting there.

CHAPTER XII.—Conclusion.

Wild and his partners found that the fun in the saloon was not taking place in the barroom, but in the one that adjoined it. They went to a window and looked in. The Two-Gun Man sat on a table, a revolver in either hand, and dancing like mad before him was a drunken miner, who seemed to be afraid of being shot. There were about ten others in the room, among them being Copper Dan and Betts. They were all laughing and shouting, save the one who was fiddling in the corner.

The noise drowned the sounds of the music, however, so it was not to that the miner was dancing. Our friends waited a few minutes and then they went to the door of the barroom and walked in. Spooner and Harvey were not a little nervous, but they made up their minds to follow, and they did. Jake, the proprietor, was behind the counter, and there were about a dozen men there, who seemed to be quite decent fllows.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said Wild, as he entered. "Why is it that you are not in the next room enjoying the fun?"

"We ain't got no use fur that kind of fun," one of them answered. "We've jest been talkin' here, an' we think it are about time Copper

Dan an' ther Two-Gun Man stopped rulin' ther camp. But there ain't no one as will go ahead. I won't myself."

"Is that the way you all think?"

The young deadshot shot a glance at every man there as he asked the question.

"Yes," some of them answered, while others nodded.

"Well, gentlemen, I'll tell you what we came in here for," said Wild. "We are going to give Bad Man's Roost a cleaning up. Every scoundrel in the camp has either got to reform, quit the camp, or die! Now I'll tell you why this has got to be, if you will listen a minute."

They were perfectly willing to listen, and there was not an interruption, save the noise that came from the adjacent room. Wild told them of the plot of the villains, and how it had turned out, so far. That was quite enough to stir those who had been afraid to act before.

"We'll stick ter yer, Young Wild West," some of them declared.

"Well, all you need do is to keep your hands off the business," was the reply. "We'll do the cleaning up all right. Come on, boys!"

Just then shots sounded in the other room. Our hero quickly opened the door. The Two-Gun Man had just got warmed up, and was making things "hum" with both hands, when Young Wild West stepped in. As quick as a flash the young deadshot picked up a chair and knocked his feet from under him.

"How does that hit you?" he coolly asked.

It is doubtful if the villain heard the question, for he went to the floor with a bang that caused the building to shake. One of his revolvers flew from his hand, but he managed to hold on the other. Crack! Wild was out for business now, and as quickly as he always did things he shot the gun from the Two-Gun Man's hand. Copper Dan had started forward, but he now stood in the center of the room, his fists clenched. Crack! Wild fired a shot at his heel, and with a howl the villain turned to get behind some of those near him.

"Come back here, you big galoot!" cried our hero. "We've started in to clean up the camp, and we are going to do it good. You galoots have got to take your medicine. There's no getting out of it. The camp has got to be cleaned up!"

Crack! Betts, who had got behind a table in a corner, fired a shot just then. It was surely meant to take our hero's life, for it came so close to his head that it touched his ear and caused the blood to flow. Crack! Crack! Cheyenne Charlie fired twice from the doorway and Betts and another man tumbled to the floor. The other had been in the act of leveling his revolver at Wild, too, and hence the scout's action. During all this the Two-Gun Man sat on the floor.

"Sit down there, Copper Dan," the boy said, as he coolly brushed the blood from his ear. "I want you two galoots to get together. Then I want you to tell what you did just before you came in here. Do as I say!"

Copper Dan obeyed.

"There they are, boys!" said Wild, with a laugh. "Fine fellows to boss the camp, are they not?"

Yells of derision came from the barroon, for those there were looking through the doorway. Wild did not let up on the two villains until he had made them tell with their own lips what they had done that night. Of course they tried to make it appear as light as possible, but what they admitted was enough to stir the miners into a rage. The men came rushing in from the barroom, and before Wild could prevent them, they had seized the villains and were dragging them out.

A dozen or more rushed into the store and Arietta was relieved of her prisoner in a jiffy.

The three were strung up without ceremony, and then almost every man in the crowd took a shot or two at the victims. But when some of the miners started for those who had been called the friends of Copper Dan and the Two-Gun Man, then Wild interfered.

"Do you know anything real bad about these men?" he asked.

"They always hung in with ther galoots we jest strung up, that's all," came the answer.

"Well, that isn't enough to hang them on. Suppose you give them till daylight to get out of the camp?"

This proposition satisfied the majority, and the result was that it was put in effect.

"Now then, gentlemen," said our hero, as he stood on the store-stoop after it was all over, "I am going to propose that you change the name of this mining camp. Bad Man's Roost is not a nice name for an orderly mining camp, where everyone has a fair show. Suppose you change it to Clean Up Camp?"

The miners took to it right away, and they went around shouting the new name. There is not much more to add to this story. Jack Harvey and Phil Spooner got big results from their placer, and got them quickly. They sold out later on to good advantage, too, and with a pile of money they went East.

But Young Wild West and his friends did not go East. There was too much in the West for them for that.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST'S PRAIRIE CHASE; OR, ARIETTA AND THE WOLF PACK."

TAKE NOTICE!

KEEP your eye on "Moving Picture Stories," No. 450, out August 12th. It is going to contain something that will interest you. Next week we are going to tell you a few facts about the affairs of Anatole.

CURRENT NEWS

THE LARGEST RAIN-GAGE.

Mount Waialeale, of Kaui, Hawaiian Islands, is the rainiest spot on earth. The United States Geological Survey measured the rainfall with a gage. The summit of the mountain is probably the most inaccessible place at which a rain-gage has ever been installed and maintained. Only the most expert mountaineers can climb to it, and the visit entails a three-day trip.

In order to meet this difficulty, the survey decided to install a gage so large that it would hold a year's rainfall. The gage placed on Waialeale in 1910 had a capacity of 600 inches, but proved too small. The present gage, installed in 1920, holds 900 inches—*Popular Science.*

COCKATOO KILLS COCK.

A bitter battle was fought at the home of B. F. Rhine, local merchant, Martinez, Cal., by a two-pound cockatoo and an eight-pound rooster.

The diminutive cockatoo proved that weight does not always prevail, for after taking a severe gruelling for almost five minutes he grabbed the rooster in the windpipe with his sharp beak, administering the death blow.

According to Rhine, the pair had been at outs for several weeks. The other day the cockatoo was perched on a bush in the back yard when the rooster spied him. The heavyweight barnyard champion made a rush at his smaller enemy, knocking him to the ground and plying spurs and beak. The cockatoo, however, dug his claws into the rooster's breast, and pulling himself upright administered the death blow.

WANDERER AT NINE, HOME AFTER 13 YEARS.

Harry Benson, who ran away from home thirteen years ago when only nine years old, reached New York the other day from Europe thoroughly sick of wandering, eager to settle down, and most anxious to locate his parents, who once lived on Sullivan street, Brooklyn.

Benson, who is now 22, worked his way to this port on the freighter Pittsburgh Bridge, which docked at Pier 39, Brooklyn, from Stockholm. The young man's experiences, besides those with the circus, included arrest as a spy in Bayu, Russia, and four months in jail in Moscow. He was released through the efforts of Mrs. Anna Skals, an American Red Cross worker, and managed to get out of Russia into Finland. There, after continually being detained by the police because he had no passport, an American Consul got him a job on the steamer.

FINDS PREHISTORIC BONES.

William Marshall, a sheep herder, discovered the skeleton of a prehistoric mammal the other day when he kicked over a "stake" in the sagebrush in Butcher Knife Canyon, about four miles east of Arlington, Gilliam county, Oregon, near the mouth of Willow Creek, while watching his flock feeding on the hills.

Parts of skeletons of prehistoric animals have been seen often in past years in canyons in eastern Oregon. The tusk Marshall discovered measured nine feet from the base, which is twelve inches in diameter, to the tip. The inside, or narrow part of the tusk, crumbles easily to the touch, but the outside is in perfect state of preservation, and in some spots the outside enamel can be seen. It has a blue black color. A surface excavation disclosed an intact skeleton, including the head, vertebræ and ribs. Arlington citizens are planning to have the specimen exhumed and mounted for exhibition purposes.

LIVING COSTS IN JAPAN.

Justification of the daily lament by foreigners in Japan over the high cost of living is found in a report given out by a committee of the American Legion of Tokio and Yokohama. The report founded on reptiles received from members of the post, fixes the living expenses for a single man at between $275 and $291 a month and for a married man between $541 and $666 a month, and said that salaries of these amounts permitted no saving whatsoever.

Only one man in the list who made reports spoke of Japan as one where luxurious living conditions prevailed. He said: "It is luxurious, or better to say, lazy, as it seems necessary to have servants, and these are so inefficient that it takes two to do the work of one."

Salaries considered fairly good in the United States are not "good" salaries in the Orient, the result of the investigation shows. The report says the committee feels that no one should come to Japan for sums less than those mentioned above.

ROCKING STONE FROM BUENOS AIRES.

Those who are familiar with the sights of Bronx Park, New York, know what a rocking stone is. For others, it may be explained that the term refers to a boulder of decent size that has been deposited, usually by glacial action, on the surface of rocky ground in such a way as to sway back and forth under the application of pressure from the wind or from a human hand, without toppling completely over. The phenomenon must obviously be a rare one, since the stone must possess sufficiently stable equilibrium to prevent it from keeling over entirely, yet be unstable enough to make motion possible. The Bronx rocking stone is an unusually heavy one, standing well above the head of the person who would rock it. And now we learn of a similar rock down in the southern hemisphere, near Buenos Aires. In at least one respect this is more extraordinary than the New York stone, for the latter presents an entirely solid picture to the eye, and one would never suppose that it would rock until one had tried it; but the Argentine boulder looks as though the merest breath would topple it over into the valley below. This rocking stone is no small stone with regard to size, either; it is 20 feet high and 18 feet long, and is estimated to weigh somewhat more than 300 tons.

Six Silver Stars

—OR—

THE BOY TREASURE HUNTERS OF YUCATAN

By DICK ELLISON

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

"Yes, it's an Indian village, where we are all liable to get killed, if we don't look sharp. I'll tell you what it is, boys. I have come to distrust Toney. I am afraid we really are in serious danger. All depends upon keeping on the good side of the fellow, and you leave that to me."

"We shall have to leave it to you, professor," replied Oliver, bluntly, "and it's to be hoped that you don't try to cause any of your shell-game tricks on us."

It was a foolish speech, of course, and one which no man with an experience with the world and its ways would ever have thought of making.

Al saw that for once Dwiggins's pale cheeks actually reddened.

There was no doubt that he was mad clear through, but he replied in a quiet tone and with considerable dignity:

"Well, now, Oliver, you didn't have to say that. Why should I do otherwise than give you boys a square deal? Aren't we all in the same boat? No, no! We want to hang together and not quarrel. There's nothing in it for any of us."

He was right, and Al afterwards cautioned Oliver about making such foolish talk, for it was not the first time he had attacked the professor.

But the climax came that night.

Al and Oliver took to their hammocks about ten o'clock. The professor remained up playing some native game with Tony, who had a greasy pack of cards with which he and the professor had been gambling right along, another thing which bothered Al not a little.

The night was stifling hot. Both the boys were heavy sleepers when they once fairly got down to it, and this they did after midnight.

From the first the carrying of their gold had been a decided bother.

After it was divided each one carried his share distributed in different pockets at first. This was awkward when they slept, so Oliver, who was handy with the needle, undertook to make three money belts and really succeeded very well. It was a great deal easier carrying the gold in their waists. Both the boys slept with them.

He had fallen into deep sleep when he was suddenly aroused by feeling a hand touch him on the naked thigh—he had loosened his trousers before lying down.

He sprang up to find himself facing the professor who stood beside the hammock.

"That you?" he exclaimed. "What in thunder are you trying to do?"

"Trying to wake you, dear boy," replied the professor coolly, "and I thought that would do it. Say, it's too hot to sleep. Don't you want some nice cool limeade? I've squeezed those limes Tony found into the water we cooled in the olla—a sort of clay crock which perfectly cools water by evaporation—it's really fine. Won't you have a drink?"

"I will," spoke up Oliver, who had been aroused by this talk. "I'm nearly choked.

He drank two tin cups full of the mixture, and Al drank one.

They had occasion to remember afterwards that the Professor did not drink.

Then it was sleep for Al right away, and when he awoke it was as if he had been brought back from another world.

He had been having dreams, vivid and strange, beyond all telling.

The sun was high, and the monkeys and paroquets were screaming and chattering among the tree tops.

Accustomed to be called by Tony while it was yet dark, Al sprang up wondering what it meant.

There lay Oliver in his hammonck in a profound sleep.

The professor's hammock was not in evidence, nor were Tony's or Diego's.

As soon as Al touched the ground his loosened trousers dropped. As he stooped to pull them up he perceived that the money belt was missing.

"My goodness! I've been robbed!" thought Al. "It's that infernal confidence man! He has stood in with the Indians. They are gone, of course!"

It was so!

Running to the river bank he found no canoes.

On the bank were two cases of canned goods, an olla, a rifle, three boxes of matches and other things, also a folded paper which Al seized and opened, reading as follows:

"Dear Boys:—It is not probable that either of you will ever read this note or need these things after the little dose I fixed up for you last night by the aid of Tony's limes and Dr. Ortiz's mdicine case. But should you, Al, whom I could only persuade to drink one cupful of my lovely decoction lime, come out of it and read this note, I will only say that I have waltzed off with the six silver stars and the rest of the outfit except these things, which I leave for your use in case you survive. It has never been my custom to take half when I can just as well take the whole. Therefore I'm off for Bacabitza, prepared to gather in the whole treasure. Ta ta!

"Yours lovingly,
"The Professor."

"Oh, the treacherous murdering scoundrel!" gasped Al. "So much for trusting a man, who openly acknowledges himself a professional cheat!

But Oliver!

Was he alive or dead!

With sinking heart Al ran to the hammock.

Oliver lay on his back, with his clothes half off of him.

The money belt was gone. So was the silver rod.

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

RATS DESTROY EVIDENCE.

I. J. Bounds, attorney, and George F. Steam, hotel man, pleaded guilty to violation of the migratory bird treaty through killing a swan and were fined $5 each by Judge Frank Rudkin in Federal Court. They stated that, while pleading guilty, the bird they killed was an Arctic goose.

When the court asked for material evidence they said that the stuffed bird, which caused the case, had been placed in a chest for safe keeping, as they had intended to use it as evidence, but that rats got into the chest and destroyed the exhibit.

GROWS NATIONAL FLAG CORN.

Professor William L. Woodburn of the Botany Department, Northwestern University, has produced a red, white and blue breed of corn in celebration of the Fourth of July. He worked three years at it and announced that he had succeeded in developing the patriotic ear.

"I got the idea about three years ago when I went to study grain among the farmers around Rockford, Ill.," said Professor Woodbarn. "I knew there were the different colors of the grain and had an idea that by careful selection and breeding a red, white and blue variety could be perfected.

"The newspapers and magazines joshed me a good deal when I announced I would try it and the farmers laughed at me, but I guess I've shown them it could be done."

The ear grows up speckled, with kernels of the three colors. Professor Woodburn asserts he will soon have the rows of kernels growing in solid bars like the American flag.

BAT MOST SENSITIVE ANIMAL.

The bat is declared by zoologists to be one of the most wonderful of all animals in its physical make-up, and there is strong reason to believe it has from one to three senses that no other animal and no human being has. Its wings are a mass of nerves, and it is these that give it the extreme soft, silky feeling as well as serving to create the most sensitive thing in nature. So delicate are these nerves and so responsive to air vibrations, that a bat can be blinded and turned loose in a room where several objects are hanging from the ceiling by cords, and it will fly about among them without touching any object, the nerves catching the "feel" of the object as the bat draws near them.

Naturalists, in experimenting with bats, have whirled a cane over their heads so rapidly that the cane appeared to be a misty funnel. On their heads they wore caps of vivid colors that bats dislike and would frequently fly at. The bats would rush at them until the whirling cane was reached and then dart between the orbit of the cane without being touched, thus demonstrating a keenness of observation and delicacy of speed judgment unequaled by any other living animal. To make this the more unusual, the bat's eyes are dim and weak, and it depends almost entirely upon the sensitiveness of its wings.

MILES OF RED TAPE.

Here is the latest specimen of Government "red tape." They say it is the longest piece in a noted collection.

A group of college students climbed to the top of the Washington Monument. The elevator was out of commission. A senior arriving at the top, exhausted, fell against one of the windows, 555 feet up, and his hat rocketed down the elevator shaft.

The hatless college lad sought the aid of a guard, who sent him back down the thousands of steps to the monument office, where he obtained an order for the opening of the lower elevator door. Armed with his pass the youth rushed back. Then he was curtly told that he must have the counter signature of another attendant. And this attendant at the moment was at the top of the shaft. Breathless the boy to establish his identity had to climb the thousands of steps again all the way to the top and after getting the signature turned around and descended the thousands more.

The lad got his hat. He also got inside information on Government red tape. Officials, learning to the incident, felt that Gen. Hall and Maria Dawes, in the course of Government housecleaning, may hurl his spectacular form against some of these specimens of needless rules which clutter up all agencies in Washington.

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A Timely Attack.

By D. W. STEVENS.

Although Commodore Porter with his West India squadron for the suppression of piracy was meeting with every success in breaking up the haunts of the outlaws in the region of Mantanzas, on the coast of Cuba, yet, further to the westward there was one freebooter who still continued his depredations.

In a swift schooner, as sharp as a sword-fish, he would suddenly emerge from one of the rugged coast bays and pounce upon any merchant craft that he saw passing in his vicinity.

No quarter would he give to his luckless victims.

Then after the captured craft was plundered she would be burned to the water's edge, thus serving as the funeral pyre of her slain occupants.

From a pirate prisoner, who, in the hope of being pardoned had turned informer, did the commodore hear much of the outlaw of the west coast.

He learned that, among his men, this pirate chief was known by the name of Captain Cain—that he was a big, bearded, villainous-looking person of thirty-five, was possessed by unusual daring, and had sworn that he would never be taken alive, should he be attacked by any war vessel.

"You must, if possible, not only capture the schooner, but must also capture the pirate chief, and be sure you use every precaution to take him alive."

So said the commodore to Roland Gray—one of his passed midshipmen—a fine-looking, manly youth of nineteen, whom he had put in command of a small gun-brig, the Spitfire, with four guns and a crew of sixty men, to cruise for the formidable outlaw.

"Ay ay, sir," answered Gray. "I will use every effort to comply with your wishes."

Having received a few more directions, the youth entered his cutter and was rowed back to the brig, which lay not far from the flag-ship.

The young officer speedily got up anchor, and, having a fair wind, he made good progress on his course.

Two days later the Spitfire, close-hauled in a light breeze, was gliding along within a stone's throw of the west coast of the island.

There was a fog-cloud extending parallel with the shore, while further out to sea the atmosphere was clear.

The brig was nearing a lofty, far-extending headland, whose shadow blending with the mist was almost as dark as that of night, when the sound of a gun was heard on the other side of the elevation.

It was quickly followed by another. Then there was a dull crash as of the falling of a mast.

The brig was kept off, and, as she glided on in the deep shadow of the headland, her occupants suddenly beheld a vessel emerge to view, round the extremity of the projecting elevation, to be soon after followed by another in pursuit.

The former was a bark, evidently a merchant craft, and her pursuer was a low, sharp-bowed schooner, with a black flag to her gaff.

"'Tis the pirate," said Roland to Mr. Sanders, his acting lieutenant.

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Sanders, "and better than all, she does not suspect our being in her vicinity."

The pirate had probably shot suddenly out of one of the coast bays, and was now less than a quarter of a mile beyond the edge of the fog-bank, darting like some fierce shark toward the bark.

The smoke still was faintly visible about his bow, showing that the gun which had been heard was his bow-chaser, and the ragged stump of the bark's mizzen-mast, with the wreckage alongside, which last was being cleared away, indicated the accuracy of his aim.

Shrouded by the fog-bank and the shadow of the headland, which completely hid her from the gaze of the people aboard the pursuer and the pursued, the brig kept on her way.

On the pirate's deck stood a tall, villainous-looking, heavily-bearded man, wearing a sort of embroidered vest, slashed trousers with buttons at the sides, and high boots, while in a sash about his waist were a long knife and a pistol.

"That must be—the pirate chief—Captain Cain," remarked Roland to his lieutenant, in a voice scarcely above a whisper.

"Ay, ay, sir, and a forbidding-looking fiend he is," was the reply.

Meanwhile the bark was now heading diagonally toward the shore, as if her captain had some faint hope that by entering the fog-bank he might elude his pursuer.

On her quarter-deck stood a girl clinging to an elderly man, as Roland could see through his glasses.

The two were evidently father and daughter, and naturally the girl was much terrified.

To head off the bark the pirate now slightly changed his course, running along parallel with the fog-bank.

Roland waited until the schooner was less than fifty fathoms from the brig, when his clear voice rang through the vessel:

"Square the yards, there! Up helm!"

The men quickly obeyed, and suddenly the Spitfire emerging from the shadow and the fog-bank, headed straight for the pirate.

At this unexpected sight there was a wild cry from the lawless crew, who, wearing low red caps and dark shirts, with sashes bristling with knives and pistols, had been collected about the low bulwarks of the schooner.

Then the voice of Captain Cain came rolling like thunder over the sea, as he shouted:

"Tack and sheets there! Ready for wearing around!"

As lightly as a sea bird the schooner spun round upon her keel, but even as she did so the ringing voice of Roland Gray was heard:

"Fire!"

The whizzing sound of the shot followed, then, crackling and snapping, the schooner's mainmast slowly tottered, until with a crash it fell, top-hamper and all, alongside.

The schooner being thus disabled, the brig gained upon her rapidly.

"Now, boys, stand by for boarding!" said Roland to his men.

The lieutenant repeated the order, and the nimble crew ran out on the booms and sprang into the rigging, where they stood ready to leap upon the deck of the foe.

With a thud the brig struck the schooner's quarter, her booms projecting over her, and, as she moved on grating alongside, the young captain shouted:

"Make fast! Away there, you boarders—away!"

Then, while a few of the men made the brig fast to the schooner with lashings, the others, with their young captain, sprang upon the pirate's deck.

A desperate combat ensued.

"Give it to them, boys, but spare the pirate captain!" shouted Roland. "We are to take him alive and capture his vessel as a prize."

"Blame you, you shall never live to do that!" roared Cain.

He leveled a fresh pistol he had snatched from a fallen man at Roland's head as he spoke.

But as he was about to pull the trigger, one of the brig's seaman knocked the weapon from his grasp with a blow from his cutlass.

A gigantic pirate rushed upon the sailor, who was soon engaged with him hand to hand, while Roland closed with the captain in a sword combat.

The pirate, thinking he saw an unguarded movement on Roland's part, aimed a savage thrust at his heart. This was the young captain's opportunity.

With a quick bend of his body he avoided the keen steel, and then by a swift, backhanded stroke, he broke off Cain's blade at the hilt.

Seeing their chief disarmed, and as their numbers were being still more reduced, while only eight of their opponents had been killed and wounded, some of them presently threw down their arms and suddenly surrended, when the others were compelled to follow their example.

"Fools—cowards!" wrathfully roared Cain. "All shall suffer for this!"

With a backward leap, he threw himself several feet away from Roland's sword, and ere he could be seized, sprang through the companionway and down into the cabin.

"Follow me, lads, some of you, and capture him!" cried Roland, as he snatched from the deck the pistol which had been knocked from the pirate's grasp and which had fallen on a coil of rope.

He saw Cain enter a room and heard him close and lock the door.

Roland ordered the men with him to break it open.

The men threw themselves against the door, the lock gave way and it swung open.

As the sailors entered, they saw Cain kneeling by a long hatchway, the hatch of which had been raised on its side revealing the run below, in which was the powder magazine.

In his left hand he held a gun-match or linstock, taken from one of several match-tubs in the room, which contained other implements of warfare.

He had already lighted the gun-match, and was about to hurl it into the magazine, when a nimble sailor sprang forward to prevent him.

With an oath the pirate discharged his pistol at the man sending the bullet through his body. The sailor fell upon his back, in his dying agony clutching the side of the raised hatch.

Again Cain was about to throw the match into the powder magazine, when another seaman, with a blow of his cutlass, inflicted a deep gash on his wrist, rendering the hand powerless.

The next moment the pirate was a captive in the grasp of several of the men.

He was taken aboad the brig, and as soon as his wounded wrist had been attended to by the vessel's doctor, he was confined with the other captives in the steerage.

Roland now had the schooner's deck cleared, and, manning her with a detail, who rigged a jury-mast forward, he prepared to sail to rejoin the squadron.

Before sailing, however, he was rowed to the merchant bark which had been saved by his timely attack on the pirate.

The bark proved to be the St. Malo, a Spanish vessel, bound from Brazil for Havana.

The girl and elderly man, the passengers aboard the vessel whom he had previously seen, were an American merchant named Edward Warren and his daughter, Charlotte. The latter was a beautiful maiden of seventeen, and when the merchant cordially invited Roland to visit him on the first opportunity after his arrival at Havana, it is needless to say that the youth accepted the invitation.

A jury-mast was rigged aboard the bark, and in company with the brig and captured schooner she sailed for her destination.

She safely arrived there, and a day later Roland Gray rejoined the squadron and made his report to the commodore, who was much pleased and who promised to promote him.

Cain and the survivors of his crew were tried and sentenced at Havana by a special court, with some of the American naval officers—among them was Roland Gray—presiding at the trial. The pirate's men, to save time, were shot dead, but their chief was hung to a gallows erected for that purpose, near the public prison.

His remains were deposited under a black rock near a lonely part of the seashore, about two miles from the port.

This gloomy landmark remained in sight for some years, when it was buried by the encroaching waters of the ocean.

His presence at the trial in Havana had afforded Roland an opportunity to visit the merchant who had invited him.

Charlotte and he were mutually attracted, and, as may be imagined, he saw her as often as he could obtain leave of absence from the commodore for that purpose.

A few years later, at which time Roland had been promoted first lieutenant, and was then aboard the sloop-of-war Eagle, at anchor in the port of Havana, the young officer and the beautiful girl were made man and wife at the home of the bride's father.

They proved to be a congenial couple.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

NEW YORK, JULY 29, 1921.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

AVIATOR EXPLORES THE GRAND CANYON.

An army flier, Lieut. Pearson, has explored the Grand Canyon with a view to studying the air currents. His experiences are interesting. He says: "In spite of the fact that the upper part of the Grand Canyon is thirteen miles from rim to rim and the lower gorge is eight miles wide, I felt cramped for room when I was descending into the chasm. I seemed every moment to be flying right slap into some cliff."

PULLS OWN TOOTH.

For many years Dr. Joseph Lutz, dentist, has told folks it didn't hurt to have a tooth pulled. The other day he discovered that two of his own needed ousting.

He screwed up his courage, barred the dental parlor doors, applied the forceps and gave a big yank. The tooth came out all right. But Joe yelled like a Comanche and swore wickedly. Then he lost his nerve and telephoned for his sidewheeler, Harry Tweedy, to come down and pull the other tooth. Never again will Joe tell people it doesn't hurt.

TROUT CAUGHT WEARING CELLULOID NECKBANDS.

Many strange tales have been written about fish, but there is one which is the strangest of all, and yet it is true, according to the Stroudsburg, Pa., Record and Times-Democrat. The tale is about two trout caught by fishermen in the Brodheads, one of the best trout streams in Monroe County, decked out in the finery of celluloid neckpieces.

The fish were caught by Charles Bond, a textile expert, and Charles Widmer, a barber. Widmer's fish, it appears, was particular in choosing colors, for it wore a pink ring. Bond's wore a white ring. The mystery of how the rings got on the trout's necks has been solved.

There is a celluloid factory on the Brodheads. The rings are cast into the stream, and the fish, attracted by the colors, put their heads through them. As the fish grew the rings fitted more securely.

387,179,492 U. S. COINS MINTED AT PHILADELPHIA.

The Philadelphia mint turned out 387,179,492 coins in the fiscal year which ended July 1. Of this number 342,278,112, with an aggregate value of $26,742,350, were for domestic use. The domestic coinage included 12,266,000 silver dollars, 4,088,000 half dollars, 50,000 Maine Centennial half dollars, 200,112 Pilgrim Fathers half dollars, 18,524,000 quarters, 29,870,000 dimes, 47,937,000 nickels and 229,343,000 pennies.

Outside coinage included 31, 903,352 silver and nickel pieces for Cuba, 1,000,000 silver pieces for Colombia, 2,000,000 nickel pieces for Peru and 2,000,000 for Venezuela.

The June output was the smallest of any month during the year, due to a lack of demand for small coins. It was confined to 1,750,000 silver dollars and 1, 436,000 nickels.

LAUGHS

Patsy—Say, Chimmie, who was Robinson Crusoe? Chimmie—He was de duck wot got a long term on de island.

"Weren't you shy when the judge asked you your age in court?" "Yes, I was about ten years shy, my dear."

"It is said that impetuous people have black eyes." "Yes, and if they don't have them, they are apt to get them."

The Seller—Do you need any typewriter supplies, sir? The Guvnor—Typewriter supplies? No. I've only just brought her a box of chocolates.

Caller—Snip & Co. have employed me to collect that bill you owe them. Owens—You are to be congratulated, sir, on securing a permanent position.

"How are you?" "Oh, I'm about even with the world." "How's that?" "I figure that I owe as many people as don't owe me."

"Don, did you give Bessie the best part of that apple, as you were told?" "Yes, I gave her the seeds. She can plant them and have the whole orchard."

"Well, my little man," said the old gentleman, "and how old are you?" "Five," answered the child. "And what are you going to be?" "Six."

Billy—It always seems to me that the second half hour is far longer than the first. Neddy—Of course it is. It goes slower because the minute hand has to climb up during that part of the hour.

Mrs. Dashaway—Yes, while we were in Egypt we visited the Pyramids. They were literally covered with hieroglypics. Mrs. Pneurich—Ugh! Wasn't you afraid some of 'em would get on you?"

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

RATTLESNAKES ABOUND.

Rattlesnakes are plentiful this year in Forest County, Pennsylvania. Henry Armburger located a den a few days ago and killed three large ones. Later in the day two boys visited the same den and killed two. A Forest County newspaper suggests that if the State would offer a bounty for rattlers the number would be greatly diminished within a year or two and the danger of being bitten lessened.

GREATEST SALT BED FOUND.

A salt deposit 650 miles long and from 150 to 250 miles broad has been discovered underlying parts of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico, according to the United States biological survey.

It is the largest salt bed in the world and lies about 1,000 feet below the surface of the ground, on an average, with an approximate thickness of 300 feet.

A sample of the salt on exhibition shows it to be in the form of hard crystals, running about 98 per cent. pure salt.

ALLIGATOR ATTACKS BOAT.

Bathers in Gallipolis, O., are giving the waters of the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers a wide berth due to the announcement that a large alligator attacked a boat in which Mason Maupin was crossing the Kanawha near Arbuckle. The "gator" with one swoop of its tail is said to have partially wrecked the boat, forcing Maupin to fight desperately with a heavy oar against the attacks of the saurian before being able to reach shore.

Old river men declare that alligators, while frequently appearing in the Mississippi and lower tributary streams, have never before been known to reach these waters.

OLDEST TREE.

With full appreciation of the beauty and recognition of the majestic size of the giant cypress of Mexico, exception must be taken to the supposition that it is the "oldest tree in the world," says the American Forestry Magazine of Washington. The honor of being the "oldest living thing" belongs to the Gen. Sherman tree in the Sequoia National Park in California. These Mexican cypresses grow to enormous size, and are believed to attain an age of 2,000 years, but it must be remembered that the Gen. Sherman was "a lusty youth of 1,500 summers when Christ was born." Its exact age cannot be determined without counting the rings, but it is probably well in excess of 3,500 years.

MOROCCAN WIVES WORK HARNESSED WITH OXEN.

Apart from all international agreements and political reasons, the stranger in the Spanish zone of Morocco soon reaches the conclusion that humane feeling and propriety call for an effort to bring the inhabitants of Morocco into contact with civilizing influences.

The sloth and misery existing among the men of Morocco strike one on every hand. They despise labor of any kind for the purpose of making a living. They think it good, however, for their women folk and see no inconsistency in harnessing their wives with beasts of burden.

Frequently woman may be seen carrying their infants in leather sacks slung at their sides while they are attached to the same yoke as a decrepit bullock or a consumptive cow dragging a clumsy cart. Behind them their lords and masters hold lengthy discussions, never giving aid even in the most difficult circumstances.

At night the men sally forth to rob in the neighborhood settlements, for they seem incapable of shaking off their inbred love of theft. Many of them, it is said, would murder a close relative for a silver coin, and it is certain that, even in circumstances of the utmost peril, they will go on thieving expeditions.

PROFESSIONAL BEGGAR CALLED BORN GAMBLER.

"The professional beggar is a born gambler," Richard A. Billings, manager of the Helping Hand Institute, Kansas City, said. "If one man turns him down there is always hope that somebody else will come across. Some of them make $8 and $10 a day.

"The beggar lurks about dark corners and sizes up those who pass by. He has them classified, and even after he encounters a man he is quick to recognize whether he has picked out the right person.

"His story is adapted to the listener. If he talks with one who seems to be a married man his story has to do with a sick child or separation from his family. He watches his prospect and when he sees the eye glisten he presses his climax to a lamentable end.

"If he is talking to a young man the tale is different. There is the story of the unjust employer or inability to work under wretched conditions. In this way he gets money from a man who has less income than himself. If he is talking to a 'sport' he may even ask for money to buy whiskey.

"Sometimes these beggars get dimes, sometimes dollars and sometimes $5 bills. There is as much uncertainty to it as a game of chance.

"These people are able to prey on the public because it is not generally known that every man can get free lodging and food here for the asking. The Helping Hand does not turn men away when they come asking for help. But the organization requires that a man who is able-bodied must work if he eats. We give them a bed and a meal, but before they get another meal they must do some work. Many men who come to the Helping Hand expect to be supported in idleness. When told they must work they prefer to work on the streets.

"The Provident Association does for families what the Helping Hand does for single men. I have been to many of our largest cities and have never found a system of charity that compares with that of Kansas City."

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

FOUND BURIED MONEY.

Mrs. Daniel Loy, a widow in modest circumstances in Eaton, O., near Richmond, Ind., is $1,600 richer through the curiosity of Mrs. A. L. Harris, wife of a former Governor of Ohio. Mrs. Harris, a neighbor, entered the Loy cellar to get an article of food for Mrs. Loy, who is ill. Buried under a mass of rubbish she found several fruit jars filled with currency amounting to more than $1,600.

GIANT PIERS.

It is announced that the first of the twelve piers which are being built at Saten Island will be ready for occupancy on August 6th. Murray Hulbert, Commissioner of Docks and Ferries, is to be congratulated upon the rapidity of the work. All of the piers will be ready by the end of the year. Seeing that the first pile was driven on May 5, 1920, this speeding up is in strong contrast to the dilatoriness which almost invariably distinguishes city construction. The piers are over 1,000 feet in length; ten of them have single-story and the other two double-deck pier sheds, and they have the advantage that there is a bay between the piers 300 feet in width.

DEATH RATE AND AGES.

The death rate among males in this country is twice as great at 40 as it is at 20, according to The Nation's Business. This means that 50 per cent. of the vital resistancee is gone at that early age, an age when a man is supposed to be at the height of his powers, an age when his vitality should be at least equal to that of a man of 20. Why isn't it? Infections, poisons, mental strain, physical inactivity, too much food, too little food, badly balanced diet—a long list of causes, most of them traceable to the widespread and fallacious notion that a man can have health without working for it!

No man need accept the physical limitations which apparently doom so many to hit the downhill trail almost before they have come to the age that should endow them with the fullest physical and mental power. Right living and right remedial measures, checked up and kept right by means of periodic examinations, forms a combination that would insure a full life to thousands who have long since given up hope of such a thing.

THE DELAWARE BRIDGE.

Work is to be started within the next few weeks by the Joint Delaware River Commission of Pennsylvania and New Jersey on a suspension bridge which will span the Delaware between Philadelphia and Camden, a distance of 1,750 feet. The main span will be 1,750 feet between towers with a clearance of 135 feet above high water. It will be hung from two thirty-inch cables, each made up of 16,531 wires, 0.192 of an inch in diameter, and all parts of the bridge will be designed safely to withstand a live load of 11,990 pounds ped lineal foot.

The main span of this bridge will be forty feet longer than that of the cantilever bridge over the Firth of Forth, and fifty feet shorter than the main span of the Quebec Bridge. It will thus come third in length of main span when the bridges built or about to be built, are completed. First is the Hudson River Bridge, 3,240 feet; second, the Quebec River Bridge, 1,800 feet, and third, the Philadelphia Bridge, 1,750 feet. About 33,000 tons of metal will be required, as compared to an estimate of 47,000 tons for a cantilever bridge over the same river. The cost is estimated by the board of engineers at $28,871,000, of which $22,479,000 covers the entire construction cost and the rest provides for the acquisition of real estate necessary for the approaches.

GIANT CRANE LIFTS ITS SMALLER BROTHER.

The Philadelphia Navy Yard boasts of the most powerful crane in existence. It can lift 350 tons at a distance of 115 feet out from its tower, and 50 tons on a reach of 190 feet. In its test for acceptance it lifted a maximum load of 480 tons. Its extreme height is 230 feet. The rotating part of the crame, with its maximum load, weighs 2,917 tons, and the total weight of the whole crane as it rests upon its pile foundations is 4,000 tons. A gigantic structure in very truth.

Recently there was constructed at the outer end of the pier on which the big crane stands a smaller crane of the traveling type. It was built at the outer end of the pier for convenience, and after completion it had to be moved past the big crane, so that it might operate on the shore end of the pier. How to make this transfer was the problem, until someone suggested that, since the yard possessed a crane of sufficient power and reach to lift the smaller crane bodily, it would be a good plan to lift the little fellow up bodily, swing it around over the water, and place it again on the pier in the required position—which was done. We hear much in these days about relativity, and in the present case, although the lifted crane was small in comparison to its big brother, it weighed no less than 310 tons. Many of us can hark back to the day when a 310-ton crane would have been spoken of as "mammoth" or "giant."—*Scientific American.*

TWELVE BOOKS FREE

These beautiful Little Movie Mirror Books—each a separate volume on a single star—will be sent absolutely free to you for three six-months subscriptions to this magazine.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, 166 W. 23d St., New York

NEW MACHINE GUN PENETRATES TANKS.

The United States Army has developed a .50 calibre machine gun capable of firing a bullet which, at 200 yards, will penetrate the one-inch armor plate of battle tanks. Major Lee O. Wright, army ordnance department, announced May 28, at the annual convention of the ordnance section of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers at Rock Island Arsenal.

The new weapon is an outgrowth of the war, he said, when fighting tanks were armored to resist the .30 calibre bullet of the rifles and machine guns then in use.

The .50 calibre machine gun fires a bullet weighing 800 grains, as compared to the 150 grains of the standard .30 calibre ammunition.

The gun is modeled along the plan of the Browning machine gun developed during the war and weighs sixty-five pounds. The gun has a muzzle velocity of 2,500 feet a second and an effective range of from 6,000 to 7,000 yards.

In testing the new gun and ammunition the ordnance department has built a rifle range at the Aberdeen, Md., proving grounds.

RHEUMATISM LEFT HIM AS IF BY MAGIC!

Had Suffered Over 50 Years!

Now 83 Years, Yet a Big Surprise To Friends

Regains Strength Goes Out Fishing Back to Business Laughs at "URIC ACID"

How the "Inner Mysteries" Reveals Startling Facts Overlooked By Doctors and Scientists For Centuries

"I am eighty-three years old and I doctored for rheumatism ever since I came out of the army over fifty years ago" writes J. B. Ashelman. "Like many others, I spent money freely for so-called 'cures', and I have read about 'Uric Acid' until I could almost taste it. I could not sleep nights or walk without pain; my hands were so sore and stiff I could not hold a pen. But now, as if by magic, I am again in active business and can walk with ease or write all day with comfort. Friends are surprised at the change."

HOW IT HAPPENED.

Mr. Ashelman is only one of thousands who suffered for years, owing to the general belief in the old, false theory that "Uric Acid" causes rheumatism. This erroneous belief induced him and legions of unfortunate men and women to take wrong treatments. You might just as well attempt to put out a fire with oil as to try and get rid of your rheumatism, neuritis and like complaints, by taking treatments supposed to drive Uric Acid out of your blood and body. Many physicians and scientists now know that Uric Acid never did, never can and never will cause rheumatism; that it is a natural and necessary constituent of the blood; that it is found in every new-born babe; and that without it we could not live!

These statements may seem strange to some folks, who have all along been led to believe in the old "Uric Acid" humbug. It took Mr. Ashelman fifty years to find out this truth He learned how to get rid of the true cause of his rheumatism, other disorders, and recover his strength from "The Inner Mysteries," a remarkable book now being distributed free by an authority who devoted over twenty years to the scientific study of this particular trouble.

NOTE: If any reader of this magazine wishes the book that reveals these facts regarding the true cause and cure of rheumatism, facts that were overlooked by doctors and scientists for centuries past, simply send a post card or letter to H. P. Clearwater, No. 534 G Street, Hallowell, Maine, and it will be sent by return mail without any charge whatever. Cut out this notice lest you forget! If not a sufferer yourself hand this good news to some afflicted friend.

Stop Using a Truss

Yes, stop it, you know by your own experience it is only a make-shift, a false prop against a collapsing wall, and that it is undermining your health. Why, then, continue to wear it? Here is a better way, which means that tiresome, torturous trusses can be thrown away forever, and it's all because Stuart's PLAPAO-PADS are different, being medicine applicators made self-adhesive purposely to prevent slipping and to afford an arrangement to hold the parts securely in place.

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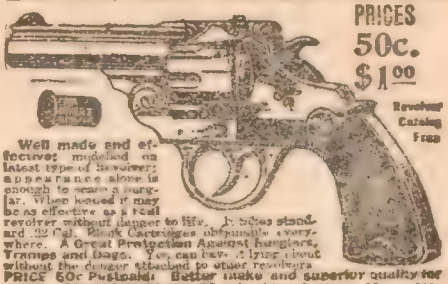

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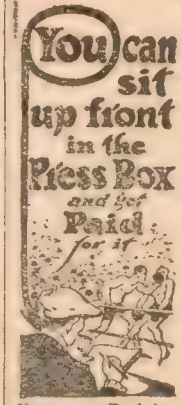

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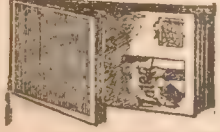

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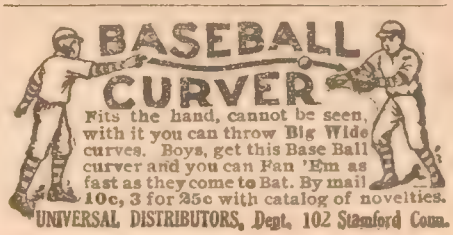

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A MEXICAN LION HUNT.

Lassoing lions is better for spring fever than sassafras tea, according to Stanley H. Graham, who has just returned from a three months' hunting trip in Mexico.

He brought back the skins of fourteen mountain lions, eight tigers, twelve deer, twelve Mexican monkeys and twenty peccaries.

"I've hunted nearly every variety of game in North America," he said, "but trailing the mountain lion beats them all for thrills. The only way to hunt lions is with blood hounds and fast horses. A lion will measure seven feet four inches from nose to tip of tail and weigh 150 pounds. A Mexican lion is what you call a 'hard boiled egg.'

"The real sport is to follow a lion, howling his fury, into a cave. I'd go into the cave with a short carbine and a candle on a pole. The lion would poke his head around an alley in the cave to see the strange light. Then I'd pop him. Of course the discharge of the gun put out the candle, and it's sort of ticklish on the backbone, because you don't know whether you have really killed him or not."

Graham's wife killed four lions.

SEA LION FOUND DYING

A sea lion, which had been terrorizing boatmen and others along the Kill van Kull for two months, is dead. He was on exhibition at the Charleston Boat Club house at Kreiserville, Staten Island. He was nearly seven feet long and weighed near 250 pounds.

Boatmen had reported seeing the big mammal in the Kill van Kull, and several attempts were made to shoot him. Rowboats and motorboats were used to trail him, but he invariably "ducked" out of danger. For a week no report of the sea lion had been heard and the residents of that section of New Jersey and Staten Island were breathing easier.

The other day Margaret George, 12 years old, of Androvette Street, Kreiserville, was picking up drift wood when she noticed a good sized "log." She got a stick and poked at it. The "log" moved. She ran to the boathouse and told the boys. Two of them accompanied her to the spot. They, too, poked the object with sticks and kept poking it until it ceased to move. They then carried it to the clubhouse.

There was a deep cut on the sea lion's head, as though it had been struck by a motorboat propeller.

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New Hair Growth After BALDNESS

On legal affidavit, John Hart Brittain, business man, certified to this: "My head at the top and back was absolutely bald. The scalp was shiny. An expert said that he thought the hair roots were extinct, and there was no hope of my ever having a new hair growth.

"Yet now, at an age over 66, I have a luxuriant growth of soft, strong, lustrous hair! No trace of baldness. The pictures shown here are from my photographs." Mr. Brittain certified further:

After hair growth

INDIAN'S SECRET OF HAIR GROWTH

Photo when bald.

"At a time when I had become discouraged at trying various hair lotions, tonics, specialists' treatments, etc., I came across, in my travels, a Cherokee Indian 'medicine man' who had an elixir that he asseverated would grow my hair. Although I had but little faith, I gave it a trial. To my amazement a light fuzz soon appeared. It developed, day by day, into a healthy growth, and ere long my hair was as prolific as in my youthful days.

That I was astonished and happy is expressing my state of mind mildly.

Obviously, the hair roots had not been dead, but were dormant in the scalp, awaiting the fertilizing potency of the mysterious pomade.

I negotiated for and came into possession of the principle for preparing this mysterious elixir, now called Kotalko, and later had the recipe put into practical form by a chemist.

That my own hair growth was permanent has been amply proved."

How YOU May Grow YOUR Hair

It has been proved in very many cases that hair roots did not die even when the hair fell out through dandruff, fever, *alopecia areata* or certain other hair or scalp disorders. Miss A. D. Otto reports: "About 8 years ago my hair began to fall out until my scalp in spots was almost entirely bald. I used everything that was recommended but was always disappointed until at last I came across Kotalko. My bald spots are being covered now; the growth is already about three inches." G. W. Mitchell reports: "I had spots completely bald, over which hair is now growing since I used Kotalko." Mrs. Matilda Maxwell reports: "The whole front of my head was as bald as the palm of my hand for about 15 years. Since using Kotalko, hair is growing all over the place that was bald." Many more splendid, convincing reports from satisfied users.

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BALDNESS, DANDRUFF
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KOTALKO contains GENUINE BEAR OIL and other potent ingredients. No alcohol, no shampoo; but a hair elixir of wonderful efficacy. All ingredients are safe and harmless, even for a child's scalp and hair. Positively KOTALKO is one delightfully reliable hair preparation that succeeds upon genuine merit. Buy a box of KOTALKO at the drug store. Or ask for Kotalko at the toilet goods or drug counter of any large department store. Remember the name. Accept nothing else as "just as good." $300.00 GUARANTEE. Or if you send 10 cents (silver or stamps), you will receive a PROOF BOX of Kotalko with BROCHURE, postpaid. Determine NOW to eliminate DANDRUFF, to treat BALDNESS, to STOP HAIR FROM FALLING. Get a box of guaranteed KOTALKO, apply once or twice daily; watch in your mirror. For PROOF BOX (10 cents, none otherwise) write to

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